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**UNITED STATES MILITARY STRATEGY
IN THE PERSIAN GULF**

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL E. E. (BUTCH) WHITEHEAD

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UNITED STATES MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE PERSIAN GULF
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17017
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ABSTRACT

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UNITED STATES MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Oil has been a critical factor in the US economy most of this century. The US was a net exporter of oil until the 1950's, but, as demand increased and production declined domestically, the US became dependent on imported oil. This problem was particularly highlighted by the oil embargo of 1973 and sharp increases in the price of oil at that time and again in 1979. The US currently draws about 15 percent of its oil needs from the Persian Gulf and that percentage is expected to significantly increase in the decade of the 1990's. The United States allies in Western Europe and Japan remain heavily dependent on oil from the Gulf.¹

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the US Military Strategy designed to insure the US and its allies continued access to Persian Gulf oil and to suggest alternatives for possible improvement. Although the focus of this paper is on US Military Strategy in the Persian Gulf, it will necessarily cover other aspects of US National Security Policy and Strategy. US Military Policy in the Persian Gulf

is derived from a complex process that inextricably links the elements of national strategy with the elements of national power. Conclusions about US policy and strategy in the Persian Gulf that are properly focused and logical require an understanding of US interests, US strategies, and US capabilities.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

In his 1988 statement of America's National Security Strategy, President Reagan outlined five key national interests which the United States Strategy seeks to assure and protect. They are:

1. The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure.
2. A healthy and growing US economy to provide opportunity for individual prosperity and a resource base for our national endeavors.
3. A stable and secure world, free of major threats to US interests.
4. The growth of human freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system.
5. Healthy and vigorous alliance relationships.* US involvement in the Persian Gulf cuts across each of these five interests; however, it is the goal of US economic well being that provides the greatest impetus for US interest in the Persian Gulf. US national security and US economic

strength are indivisible. As the global economy becomes increasingly interdependent we must be aware of economic factors that may affect our national security. Since our dependence on foreign sources of supply has grown in many critical areas, the potential vulnerability of our supply lines is a matter of concern. Specifically, we must ensure access to foreign markets, energy, and mineral resources for ourselves our allies and our friends.³

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERSIAN GULF

Petroleum Resources

The general geological factors of the Persian Gulf have given rise to vast quantities of crude oil. These oilfields are often of extraordinarily large size, and the oil is held under considerable pressure, so that very few wells need to be sunk to tap a large area, and the crude oil often rises of itself without much pumping. These factors allow an unusually low cost of production,⁴ about \$2.00⁵ per barrel as compared to the \$5.00 to \$10.00 per barrel for US oil.⁶

The United States and particularly our allies, remain substantially dependent on oil imports. The gulf countries supply 25% of all oil moving in world trade today;⁷ they possess 63% of the world's known petroleum reserves, that equates to approximately 400 billion barrels as compared to 25 billion for the US, 22 billion for Europe and 61 billion for the USSR.⁸ About 15% of the total 42% of US oil imports in 1986 came from the gulf, interestingly enough, this was a level higher than at the time of the 73-74 oil

embargo. Current Energy Department studies indicate US oil imports will double in the next decade reaching 13 million barrels a day by the mid 1990's. Current production rates are depicted in figure 1. It is estimated that the current rate of US production will last for approximately 9 years as compared to 100 more years for Saudi Arabia.¹⁰

As the 1973-74 and 1978-79 oil shocks showed, a small disruption of less than 5% can trigger a sharp escalation in oil prices. In the first oil crisis, the cost of oil quadrupled; in the second it more than doubled. The oil market will also react almost as sharply to expectations of a supply cutback as to a real drop in production, at least in the short run. A new large oil price increase will cause major damage to the US economy and the economies of our allies in the West; it will be especially devastating to the developing countries.¹¹ "Also as our dependency on foreign petroleum rises, the latitude of US foreign policy is sharply diminished."¹²

US decision making and diplomacy becomes linked to the policies, politics and decisions of the Persian Gulf oil producers. Organizations such as OPEC can then have a significant affect on US foreign policy. Dr. Schlesinger, in his testimony before the committee on Armed Services hearings in January 1987, made this point:

"....it seems to me, to retain the view that the United States ought not allow itself to become excessively dependent upon foreign sources of petroleum. We are allowing ourselves to do that today. I do not know whether all the members or most of the members approved of the President's decision to attack Tripoli some months ago now, but let me assure you that that decision would not have been as easily made if the oil market had been 60 percent dependent, let us say, on foreign sources of supply--mostly in the Arab world."

This perhaps explains the criticism of US actions against Lybia, from many of our NATO allies that are largely dependent on Persian Gulf oil.

Soviet and Iranian Influence

The US has longstanding friendly relations and shares mutual political interests with the moderate Arab gulf states, which, because of their great wealth and oil reserves, are influential both within and beyond the region. US policies have long been aimed at promoting regional security and stability while assisting its gulf friends in their resistance to increased Soviet influence and presence. US political concerns are also certainly directed at Iran. Today US interests remain directly threatened by the Iranian Government's pursuit of expansionism and their subversive and terrorist policies directed against the US, its allies and friends.¹³ Since the gulf is an important crossroad of vital economic and political importance to the free world, the US has a strategic interest in ensuring that it does not come under the domination of a power hostile to the US, its Western allies, or to its friends in the region. The US does not want the Soviet Union either to control directly or to increase significantly its presence or influence over the region. Iran's desire to eliminate superpower presence in the area plus its policy of expansionism has created instability in the Arab nations of the gulf. The effects of either Soviet or Iranian hegemony in the gulf may prove catastrophic to US interests.¹⁴

CHAPTER I

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER II

THE THREAT

USSR

The Persian Gulf region, rich in oil and in conflict, is a growing source of money for the Soviet Union. It is an area where demand for arms and oil, the two commodities that account for most Soviet hard currency earnings, are high. Moscow's interest and behavior in the gulf are attributed to its desire to control gulf oil and to use it to pressure the West. The Iran-Iraq war has given the USSR many opportunities to swap arms for oil, which it then exports to the West for much needed hard currency.¹⁵

Oil and Hard Currency

The USSR is the world's second largest producer of fuels and energy. Despite recent problems, it remains a net oil exporter; however, as with the US, oil is a dwindling resource in the Soviet Union. Gulf oil now directly affects the industrial democracies because their economies rest on the daily production from the region. As Soviet oil reserves are depleted they too will become increasingly dependent on Gulf oil. However, Moscow's immediate problem is not that supplies will tighten enough to require net energy imports or military action in the Persian Gulf. Rather, energy exports are a major source of hard currency earnings that in turn are used to import products that the Soviets can not produce efficiently by world standards.¹⁶

Gorbachev, through his policy of Glastnost, has initiated a flurry of Soviet diplomatic activity in the Middle East in an effort to broaden Soviet options there. Moscow is now showing greater willingness to make practical and ideological concessions to improve relations with Middle Eastern states from Egypt and Israel to the Persian Gulf. I believe the primary Soviet objective, to set limitations on the military and political influence of the US, remains unchanged. Both in the Gulf and the Arab-Israeli theater, this objective now dictates a policy of conflict avoidance, possibly even of conflict resolution, to eliminate pretexts for American military intervention.¹⁷ The attempt to broaden Soviet options, as distinct from the past unsuccessful effort to build a radical bloc in the area, offers some promise for a Soviet challenge to American predominance.¹⁸

Military Presence

The Soviets maintain a significant military presence in the region. They have a substantial advisory presence throughout the area, including Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Ethiopia, North Yemen and South Yemen. This advisory presence is an inroad made possible by their policy of serving as an arms merchant to virtually all who are interested. The steady flow of Soviet arms supports their efforts to gain influence and access throughout the region. They have firm footholds, with accompanying basing rights in, Ethiopia, South Yemen and Afghanistan.¹⁹ Operating from

these well established bases in the area gives the Soviets the opportunity to rapidly move military forces into the region.

FUNDAMENTALIST MUSLIMS

Fundamentalist Muslims pose a unique challenge to US interest in the Persian Gulf region. They base their views on public and private life, indeed their entire existence, on the sacred law of Islam, the Shari'a. The massive body of regulations, drawn from precepts found in the Koran and other Islamic writings covers everything from the most public aspects of life; a penal code based on corporal punishment, taxes in accordance with Koranic levies, second-class citizenship for non-Muslims living under Muslim rule; to the most intimate, such as personal hygiene and sexual relations.²⁰

Fundamentalists portray Western civilization as aesthetically loathsome, ethically corrupt and morally obtuse. They claim that the West spreads its culture to weaken the Muslims and steal their resources. Shi'ite and Sunni fundamentalists hardly differ in goals or methods, though they reside in different parts of the Muslim world. Fundamentalists everywhere resemble each other. When in opposition, they all pressure governments to reject Western influences; when in power they attempt to extirpate Western ways directly.²¹ However, differences do exist among the Fundamentalists on methods and commitment. The conservatives promote their ideas in peaceable ways, through missionary work, education and personal virtue. They

believe in evolutionary change. They do not rebel against the authorities. Radicals attack their governments for ignoring the Shari'a and claim power for themselves on the grounds that they alone aspire to implement the whole body of Islamic precepts. Radicals pursue revolutionary change through violence.²²

Muslim rulers must understand the Islamic Fundamentalist movement and must be careful, not to arouse fundamentalist anger when assessing ties to the US. The Shah of Iran associated closely with the US; the same was true of Anwar Sadat. Their association and orientation to the West aroused Fundamentalist anger.²³ The US must also recognize this danger associated with increased ties to friendly Muslim countries and proceed with caution.

Missiles/NBC Weapons

The possibility that certain regional states have, or could soon acquire, nuclear, chemical and/or biological weapons creates an extremely unstable condition anytime there is the threat of a major intra-regional confrontation between these states. Libya is known to have a chemical weapons manufacturing capability and has made chemical weapons shipments to Somalia. Iraq has made use of chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war. Israel is believed to possess nuclear weapons. Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, Israel, Egypt and South Yemen possess ballistic missiles. The proliferation of NBC weapons coupled with a ballistic missile delivery means is a new challenge for US

policy in the region. A President committing US forces to the area must now consider possible operations in a nuclear, chemical or biological environment.

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16. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

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19. Don A. Schwab, CENTCOM Issues/Challenges/Operations, p. 5.

20. Daniel Pipes, "Fundamentalist Muslims Between America and Russia," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1986, p. 4.

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CHAPTER III

NET ASSESSMENT

The two critical questions to be answered here are: (1) Is the Persian Gulf a vital US interest? and (2) What does vital interest to the United States mean and how should we assess it?

Background

US military involvement in the gulf region dates from World War II When US Army Air Corps airplanes and crews shared British airfields in the area. An American naval presence in the persian Gulf and Arabian Sea began and was institutionalized in 1949 with the establishment of the Middle East Force, whose homeport was the British naval base at Jufair, Bahrain. Even at this early date, the US sought to impede Soviet advances in the region. Shortly after WWII, American pressure was a factor in the withdrawal of Soviet troops in Iran.

Equally important to our military presence was the establishment of American business interests in the Gulf region. The Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) was established in the 1930's in Saudi Arabia. By 1945, ARAMCO was producing about 50,000 barrels of crude oil per day. They began large scale oil production after the war and by 1977 their production had grown to over 9 million barrels per day.²⁴

Truman and Carter Doctrine

The Eisenhower administration believed that the Persian Gulf region was important to the US as part of the world wide containment policy established by President Truman. That policy continued largely unchanged until 1979, when Iran underwent a revolution. As a result the US lost the support of all the Asian members of the original Baghdad Pact; Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and even Turkey. This represented a serious reversal of twenty-five years of US diplomacy in the region.==

Current US policy to defend the Persian Gulf region with US forces is not based on any treaty commitments but rather on a declaration made by President Carter in his State of the Union address to Congress in January 1980. The basis for Mr. Carter's extension of US vital interests into the Persian Gulf region was his fear that the Soviet Union, which had sent an invasion force into Afghanistan only three weeks earlier, was then positioning itself for military moves into Iran and Pakistan. He believed that a successful take over of Afghanistan would give the Soviets a deep penetration between Iran and Pakistan, and pose a threat to the oil fields of the Persian Gulf and to the crucial waterways through which so much of the world's energy supplies had to pass.==

On 23 January 1980, President Carter included this statement in his State of the Union message:

"Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interest of the United States of America, and will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

The Carter Doctrine has been many times reaffirmed by President Reagan. It was clearly directed at the Soviets when Mr. Carter made that statement in 1980 but increasingly the Reagan administration broadened the policy's application to include any force which would threaten US interests in the area.²⁷ The important fact here is that an American president for the first time declared that the Persian Gulf region was a vital interest of the United States and that it would be defended by American military forces. That declaration remains the official view of the US government, but it has not been approved by a specific act of Congress, which leaves open to doubt the US national commitment to the Persian Gulf as a vital interest.²⁸

Setting Priorities

"We know that the spread of communism is inimical to our interests, but we also know that we are not omnipotent and that we must set priorities. We cannot send American troops to every region of the world threatened by Soviet-backed communist insurgents, though there may be times when that is the right choice and the only choice, as in Grenada. The wide range of challenges we face requires that we choose from an equally wide range of responses: from economic and security assistance to aid for freedom fighters to direct military action when necessary. We must discriminate; we must be prudent; we must use all the tools at our disposal and respond in ways appropriate to the challenge."²⁹

Secretary of State Shultz 1985

The problem in setting national interest priorities often stems from the disagreement on how to define the term national interest and then determining what policies should flow from its definition. Donald E. Nuechterlein offers a model that defines these terms and establishes a conceptual framework for critical analysis of national interests. The

components of his conceptual framework for assessing national interests is the matrix shown in figure 2. The national interest matrix comprises four basic interests of nation-states on the vertical axis and four intensities of interest on the horizontal one. The task is to decide how large a stake the US has in a specific international issue or crisis affecting its four basic national interests. Then estimate the intensity of interest that other countries have in the same issue, for each basic interest. By comparing the levels of interest at stake for principal countries involved, a calculation can be made as to whether the issue is likely to be negotiable or whether it will probably lead to an armed confrontation. These calculations about the intentions of other countries are subjective; however, policy-makers, especially the President and his National Security advisors, need to calculate carefully the degree of the US interest at stake and decide whether it is desirable to negotiate an issue that could seriously affect the United States defenses, economic well-being, alliances with other countries, or sense of values.³⁰

To understand the application of the national interest matrix I offer an explanation of the terms and their concepts as follows. NATIONAL INTEREST: The country's perceived needs and aspirations in relation to other sovereign states constituting its external environment. DEFENSE OF HOMELAND: Protection of the people, territory, and institutions of the US against potential foreign dangers. This is usually referred to as the national defense interest. ECONOMIC WELL-BEING: Promotion of US

international trade and investment, including protection of private interests in foreign countries. This may be called the national economic interest. FAVORABLE WORLD ORDER (International Security): Establishment of a peaceful international environment in which disputes between nations can be resolved without resorting to war and in which collective security rather than unilateral action is employed to deter or cope with aggression. This interest is also concerned with questions of alliance systems and world balance of power. PROMOTION OF VALUES (Ideology): Promulgation of a set of values that US leaders believe to be universally good and worthy of emulation by other countries. SURVIVAL INTEREST: A survival interest exists when there is an imminent credible threat of massive destruction to the homeland if another state's demands are not quickly met. Example, The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. VITAL INTEREST: Vital interest differs from survival interests principally in the amount of time that a country has to decide how it will respond to an external threat. Vital interests involve economic, world-order, and ideological issues as well as those concerning defense of the homeland and may ultimately be as crucial to a country as direct threats to its independence. If political leaders decide that they cannot compromise an issue beyond what has already been done and are willing instead to risk economic and military sanctions, the issue is probably vital. Example, the attempted rescue mission of American hostages in Iran in 1980. MAJOR INTEREST: A major interest is one that a country considers to be important but not crucial to

its well-being. These are issues that can cause serious concern and even harm to US interests and policies abroad, but policy makers usually come to the conclusion that negotiation and compromise, rather than confrontation, are desirable. Example, the Arab oil embargo in 1973 and the decision of OPEC to greatly increase the world price of crude oil. Ultimately, the difference between a major and a vital interest comes down to what is tolerable. PERIPHERAL INTEREST: A peripheral interest is one which does not seriously affect the well-being of the US as a whole, even though it may be detrimental to the private interests of Americans conducting business abroad. Example, imprisonment abroad of American citizens on drug charges.³¹

Analysis

The following is an analysis of US national interest in the Persian Gulf using the national interest matrix. See figure 3. There are two reasons why the US might have a vital interest in the Persian Gulf region: (1) To insure the continued flow of Persian Gulf oil to the world markets, unimpeded either by outside interference in the region or by conflicts among states within it, such as the Iran-Iraq war. (2) To prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its influence or domination in the Middle East and challenging the world balance of power. The latter is the US world-order interest and the former is the US economic well-being interest. Let's examine these two bases of a vital interest. In 1973 the Western world was confronted by an embargo of Persian Gulf oil by the Arab States. Europe,

Japan, and the US all suffered economically, to include a four-fold increase in the price of oil. However, in spite of this clear threat to US economic well-being, President Nixon decided that the US economic interest was major, not vital. He concluded that the country could live with the consequences of his decision even though the gas lines in the US and the increased prices of energy were painful. Since then the US and Great Britain have become less dependent on Persian Gulf oil largely due to North Sea exploration for Great Britain and Alaska and Mexican imports for the US. Although as pointed out earlier in this paper, the US is getting an increasing percentage of its oil imports from the Persian Gulf. However, Japan and much of Western Europe remain heavily dependent on Persian Gulf oil.³² The decision by Mr. Reagan in 1987 to reflag Kuwaitian oil tankers and protect them from Iranian attack in the Persian Gulf, using US military forces, was a clear expression of US vital interest in the area. That action while appearing to support our economic well-being interest was equally aimed at our favorable world order interest. If the US had not taken the initiative, The Soviets were prepared to assist Kuwait. The second possible basis for declaring a US vital interest in the Persian Gulf, the one that motivated Mr. Carter to make his January 1980 assertion, is potential Soviet encroachment on its southern neighbors' territory and use of this strategic position to dominate the politics of the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asian states. The Soviet desire, or interest, to extend its influence southward toward the Indian Ocean is not

questioned by most experts on the Soviet Union; what is in dispute is what risks Moscow is willing to take, how strongly the small Persian Gulf states would resist Soviet pressures, and whether it is a US vital interest, entailing the potential use of force, to prevent the Soviet Union from increasing its influence in this region. In short, has the containment of Soviet influence outside Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia become so important to the US that the President should ask Congress for authorization to engage in warfare with the Soviet Union?³³

Turning to Iran, what should US Policy be toward Iran? It is hard to imagine that the American people and Congress would accept Iran as a vital or even major American interest in the foreseeable future, in light of Iran's current government and their terrorist actions against the US. Iran like Iraq (after it changed governments in 1958 and turned against the West) will find it difficult to gain support of any Western country if it asks for help to resist Soviet intimidation. Saudi Arabia; however, is different, a country that has shared US interests in the region since WWII and which could seriously affect the West's economic well-being if it succumbed to Soviet or Iranian influence, or to the accession to power of a deeply nationalist, anti-Western government.³⁴ I believe that the US has shown its commitment to the Persian Gulf area and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman) through its recent reflagging and protection of Kuwaitian oil tankers. However, US military action against Soviet military forces in the area

would probably only occur if Saudia Arabia or Kuwait were invaded by the Soviet Union.

The US should not use its forces to intervene in a Saudi civil war, or a threatened coup d'etat.³⁵ These types of military actions have often resulted in a net loss rather than a long term gain.

The level of US interest in the Persian Gulf is summarized as shown on the interest matrix in figure 3. It is assumed here that the promotion of values interest does not include trying to institute Western type governments or Christian values in the Muslim countries, and that guaranteeing individual freedoms is not a primary objective of US foreign policy in the area. When considering the varied religious groupings, these last assumptions, if heeded by the US, make excellent foreign policy for the area.

Chapter III

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER IV

CENTCOM FORCE PROJECTION

The Persian Gulf area is a part of the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). CENTCOM's AOR includes the 19 countries surrounding the waters of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. It is clearly a large theater with little infrastructure. In effect, it is an immature theater when compared to the European or Northeast Asia regions. The CENTCOM AOR was carved away from the PACOM and EUCOM AOR's in 1983 primarily as an effort to effectively plan and execute military contingencies that would ensure the continued flow of crude oil from the region.³⁶

WAYS and MEANS

This chapter will address the ways (concepts) and means (resources) that USCENTCOM will employ to secure US Military Objectives (ends) in the Persian Gulf. These Objectives are: maintaining freedom of navigation; strengthening the moderate Arab States; reducing the influence of anti-Western powers, such as the Soviet Union and Iran; and assuring access to oil on reasonable terms for ourselves and our allies.³⁷

Forces/Routes

In 1987, the Central Command had the following forces "potentially" available for combat: 5 Army Divisions, 1 1/3 Marine Amphibious Forces, 7 Tactical Fighter Wings, 2 Strategic Bomber Squadrons, 3 Carrier Battle Groups, 1

Surface Action Group, and 5 Maritime Patrol Air Squadrons. At first glance, quite a formidable force to execute both a deterrent and a warfighting strategy.³⁹ The US stated objective is to be able to move a 400,000 man force into Southwest Asia, time phased within a six week period; however, since these forces are currently deployed elsewhere, the initial concern of CENTCOM is the deployment of these forces into theatre and then sustaining them once they are there.³⁹

The timely projection of such a large force over such a great distance is indeed a challenge. The distance, by sea, from the United States to Southwest Asia is 12,000 miles (28-33 days depending upon port of embarkation) unless the Suez Canal can be used, then it is about 8,500 miles (20-24 days). The air routes are about 7,000 miles (15-18 hours), this is twice the distance to Europe.⁴⁰

Warfighting and Deterrence

The rapid deployment of combat forces is critical to success in the area. Achieving prompt US response with combat battalions on the ground in the initial phases of an incident will provide the linchpin for warfighting and could provide the impetus for deterrence. It may very well have greater strategic impact than a corps arriving several weeks later. Rapid delivery of a force larger than the 82d Airborne division may have an impact on an indigenous conflict, but the size of the force that can be deployed prior to M+20 (mobilization plus 20 days) into theatre is limited. Although airlift enhancements over the past 10

years have improved our force projection capability, the 20 day window, between the arrival of airlifted and sealifted troops, will not provide more than three divisions.⁴¹

Common military thinking is that protracted combat against large mechanized forces will be best prosecuted by heavy units in conjunction with highly mobile air assault and attack units. The extended frontage in the CENTCOM theater places a premium on tactical mobility. The early arrival of a three division light force should be able to hold the necessary facilities to debark the heavy forces arriving at M+20. In an active combat situation, force multiplying combat support and service support units will be needed prior to the deployment of the fourth division. This force is beyond current and projected airlift capability. Current planning envisions air transportation for only the 82d division and one brigade of the 101st division. No one is talking about aerial delivery of the number of light divisions in our current force structure before M+20.⁴²

An invading Soviet force will not be without its own major logistical problems. There are two mountain ranges, a dissected plateau, and more than 1,000 kilometers that separate the Gulf from the Soviet Union. The initial tasks of US ground combat units in this scenario are to secure the necessary airfields and ports and also delay the invading force. Small ground blocking units and tactical air power applied at the many choke points should slow the southern advance and limit the amount of Soviet power that can be projected. Larger US ground units deployed in the interior of Iran provide a difficult sustainment problem and will be

subject to being cut off by Soviet vertical envelopment and defeated by advancing Soviet mechanized units.⁴³

The delaying fight must allow the US time to bring in mechanized and air assault/attack units by sea. One analyst has estimated that the Soviet transit will take in excess of 30 days and that the Soviets will be able to sustain only five divisions overland to the Gulf.⁴⁴ A situation that, if true, allows the timely arrival of mechanized US forces for the major conflict. The critical fight will most likely occur as the Soviets emerge from the second mountain range (the Zagros). US heavy divisions will be required to defeat these forces. Air assault and attack units will be particularly valuable in the mountainous terrain and against Soviet open flanks. Force ratios should favor the US position, provided they arrive in theater as required.

Strategic Mobility

Moving this 400,000 man force into Southwest Asia within the time constraints of a six week window can only be accomplished with a significant sealift capability. While airlift is projecting the delaying force, sealift will deliver the preponderance of ground combat power and its sustainment base. A heavy division in intense combat will consume 5,000 tons of ammunition and 2,700 tons of fuel a day.⁴⁵ US airlift capabilities in 1987 included, among others, 110 C-5's, 214 C-141's, 57 KC-10's, 520 C-130's, and, in the event of emergency, the considerable Civilian Reserve Air Fleet. Additional C-5B's and KC-10's are being purchased to achieve the official (but minimum) goal of 66

million ton miles per day. Sea lift includes 30 Common User Ocean Transportation vessels, the Navy's Ready Reserve Force (which by 1992 will contain 100 dry-cargo ships and 20 tankers), plus more than 400 non-government controlled ships. The 116 ships in the National Defense Reserve fleet provide a backup. The objective is for these ships to be capable of being readied for duty within one to three months.⁴⁶

Strategic mobility improvements continue with the addition of eight "SL 7" class ships to the sealift assets as well as the projected development of the C-17 for strategic airlift. However, even with these improvements, airlift and sealift requirements fall short of meeting the objective. Part of the shortfall is made up through the prepositioning of supplies. The Maritime Prepositioning Ship program (MPS) involves chartering 13 ships organized into three MPS squadrons that can carry the equipment and supplies to sustain three MAB's for 30 days. One squadron is deployed in the Atlantic Command area, a second to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and a third in the Pacific. A second afloat pre-positioning program is the Pre-positioning (PREPO) ships program (formerly the Near Term Pre-positioning Force). The 12 PREPO ships are deployed in the Mediterranean, Pacific, and Atlantic with supplies for the Army, Navy and Air Force.⁴⁷

Summary

The difficulties for CENTCOM may be many and some very serious; however, its establishment has proved quite

beneficial. The creation of CENTCOM and the assessment of the requirements any contingency would generate have helped to increase the attention paid to the issues of deployability and sustainability. The US is much more knowledgeable concerning the relative strengths and weaknesses of the major parties in the area and the requirements necessary for undertaking successful military operations in various contingencies. The efforts undertaken by CENTCOM thus far may well have sent a clear signal to the Soviets to the effect that invading Afghanistan is one thing, but the US has drawn the line on further moves in the area. ^a

CHAPTER IV

ENDNOTES

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38. Frederick H. Hartmann and Tobert L. Wendzel, Defending America's Security, p. 309.
39. John A. Adams, "Balancing Strategic Mobility and Tactical Capability," Military Review, August 1988, p. 14.
40. Hartmann and Wendzel, p. 310.
41. Adams, p. 13.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 14.
45. Ibid., p. 16.
46. Hartmann and Wendzel, p. 308.
47. Ibid., p. 307.
48. Ibid., p. 309.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The Persian Gulf has long been critically important to US national interests. Both the administration and outside commentators have generally accepted two essential US interests in the affairs of the Gulf: (1) The need of ourselves , our allies and our friends for continued access to oil supplies originating from the Gulf, and (2) The need to prevent further Soviet penetration into the region, both because of the need for Western access to the oil supplies and because of the effect on overall Western security from further Soviet adventurism. It is clear that the industrialized economies and, indeed, the Third World, will continue to require ready and predictable access to oil supplies well into the 21st century, and that the Arab countries of the Gulf will, especially from the 1990's onward, be the most significant source for such supplies.⁴⁹

Except for the "Iran-Contra" fiasco, there has been basic consistency in American policy toward the region. In the last two decades the strategic importance of the Gulf has increased, US relations there have grown more intense and complex and new challenges to American interests have emerged. Often US policy makers are criticized in the Gulf for talking about the region too starkly in terms of American interests rather than in the context of the concerns of the people who live there. The point is worth heeding. To do so sensitizes Americans influencing our Gulf

policy to the aspirations of the people and the political dynamics there. This emphasizes that American policy must reflect a sound understanding of the region. In particular American policy must recognize that there is no single approach; that America must work with each country according to that country's own perception of its own national interest. But recognizing this reality should not obscure two others. One is that it is prudent for Americans to think about policy toward the Gulf in terms of America's own national interest. The other is that there is nothing wrong with the leaders in the region contemplating the importance of the United States to the Gulf's strategic interests.²⁰

FORMULATION OF NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY

National Military Strategy (ENDS) must support national strategy and comply with national policy, which is a broad course of action or statement of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives. In turn, national policy is influenced by the capabilities and limitations of military strategy. Military Strategic Concepts (WAYS) are concerned with the various methods of applying military force. In essence this becomes an examination of courses of action designed to achieve the military objective. Military objectives and military strategic concepts of a military strategy establish requirements for resources, and are in turn influenced by the availability of resources. Strategic Military Resources (MEANS) determine military capabilities. For example, these may include conventional and unconventional general purpose

forces, strategic and tactical nuclear forces, defensive and offensive forces, active and reserve forces, war material and weapons systems as well as manpower. The conclusion is that Military Strategy equals Military Objectives plus Military Strategic Concepts plus Military Resources. The important point to be remembered is that the military objective is only the means to a political end. Hence the military objective should be governed by the political objective.⁵¹

PROPOSED NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY
FOR THE PERSIAN GULF

Military Strategic Objectives

1. Guarantee the United States, its allies and friends continued access to Persian Gulf oil.
2. Prevent/Limit Soviet military expansion and influence within the region.
3. Deter major intra-regional conflicts.
4. Insure the military strength of US friends in the region is sufficient to meet self-defense needs.
5. Insure access to regional ports, airbases and other military facilities by US military forces.
6. Insure regional support and security for US military facilities by US military forces.
7. Insure regional support and security for US military prepositioning programs in the area.
8. Conduct a viable and highly visible anti-terrorism program for and within the region. ⁵²

Military Strategic Concepts

Security Assistance We must regain lost ground!

Current security assistance programs, variously legislated as Economic Support, Military Assistance, Foreign Military Sales Credits, or International Military Education and Training, are seriously underfunded for pursuing an integrated, long-term strategy and too micro-managed by Congress to enable the Administration to deal with crises. US assistance programs should have a strong thrust toward endowing the aid recipient with self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Improvements that can be made are: multiyear appropriations; grant more funds for foreign aid and reallocate funds among aid claimants; allow security assistance recipients the opportunity to claim a trade-in allowance for worn-out or damaged equipment; and involve the CINC's more with security assistance planning as well as operations.²³

Security assistance relationships with Gulf states does require careful management, to assure that they make appropriate contributions to real defence needs and are handled in a way that strengthens overall relations. The recent Saudi turn to British aircraft and Chinese missiles because of congressional opposition to selling a second tranche of F-15's points up the difficulties involved. Certainly American reliability as a source of arms has been damaged. The irony is that the theoretical threat to Israel, the ostensible basis of congressional concern, is greater with the Saudis possessing these weapons rather than more F-15's, over which the US could have kept some element

of control.==

Develop Alternatives for US Bases The Department of Defense, in concert with the State Department, should attempt to negotiate a permanent location for USCENTCOM Headquarters in the Middle East. While political realities and funding constraints probably will preclude the forward basing of large US forces in the region, locating USCENTCOM Headquarters in the Middle East would provide a forceful, but relatively low-key, US military presence in the area. A relocation of CENTCOM Headquarters from CONUS would significantly enhance its ability to perform its mission and send a clear signal as to the importance the US places on the region.==

However, there is risk involved. US bases and US military personnel become an easy target for political demonstrations and terrorist aggression. Radical Fundamentalists can also sway political factions that could result in another "Shah of Iran" incident. Forward basing should be held as a target of opportunity and not vigorously pursue as an absolute must. In view of this unfilled requirement for bases in this area as well as in many other Third World nations, the United States should now begin seriously to develop, by exploiting all the ingenuity of its scientist and engineers, alternative ways of performing the functions for which US forces have depended on forward bases: that of supporting forces; staging and sustainment of reinforcements; and command, control, communications and intelligence. This may involve: restructuring of Land and

Air Forces; basing forces and materiel at sea; continued improvements in strategic mobility shortfalls; and continued advancements and improvements in the use of Space platforms.⁵⁶ Continued improvements in strategic mobility shortfalls is critical to the concept of rapid deployable forces not only for the Persian Gulf region, but for NATO and other theaters. Prepositioning of war reserve stocks, I do not believe is the answer to strategic mobility shortfalls. Besides being extremely vulnerable they may not be located where they will be needed. US military force projection should rely on the rapid deployment of US based forces, this requires a commitment to improving strategic mobility. These improvements must be costed against other less desirable alternatives and the dollar difference invested into strategic mobility.

Rapid Deployable Forces Through CENTCOM, the US should maintain a credible, deployable contingency response force for the region and sufficient air and sealift to deploy this force. Although constrained by available and programmed strategic lift, such a force exists and can deploy relatively quickly to the region. Elements of this force should, and does include special operations, counter-terrorist and civil affairs teams trained and equipped to operate anywhere in this region on short notice.⁵⁷

CENTCOM, JCS and the State Department should conduct combined planning with US allies to insure they are willing and able to provide similar forces to the region when their

and our interests coincide. CENTCOM should continue to sponsor port visits and exercise of the Right of Passage in the region by US Naval forces. Frequent US joint/combined exercises with friendly regional states are also required.²² These exercises serve to demonstrate American resolve with regards to the importance of the area. They also help solidify standardization and interoperability.

Military Strategic Means

General Purposes Forces

The US has made the commitment to defend its interest in the Persian Gulf region, as was demonstrated by the recent reflagging of Kuwaitian oil tankers. That commitment includes as a response sending US forces into combat. Against that sort of contingency, the US must maintain robust, strategically mobile General Purpose Forces capable of striking swiftly and decisively.²³ Both light and mechanized forces will be required to achieve victory on the battlefield if required to fight a Soviet incursion into the area. However, other options short of conflict with Soviet forces must be maintained and realistically executed. For example, in the case of the war between Iran and Iraq, neutrality was a sound US strategy. Unfortunately, fighting spread to include attacks on ships of non-belligerents transiting the Persian Gulf. At that juncture, the United States employed Naval, Air Force and Army forces to protect its interests and its own ships there, and did so in a way that made it evident that US forces would act to defend themselves and neutral shipping against acts of war, and

strike preemptively if need be. We wanted to keep the oil flowing; we wanted to encourage our friends in the region, and our allies elsewhere, to associate themselves with us. This reversal of US Strategy rested on having a force that was rapidly deployable and then capable of eliminating threats by precise counteraction, so that by using discriminate force we could deter any belligerent from impairing freedom of the seas, or otherwise broadening the conflict.

Technology

The United States and its allies have a marked technological lead over the USSR because of our relatively open societies and economies, with incentives for inquiry, exchange of ideas and innovation. The US must continue to pursue its strategic objectives through use of the Free World's technological edge.⁴⁰ Advanced Development and leading edge technology are central to US warfighting doctrine.

Build New Defenses Against Terrorism

To defend against the depredations of terrorists and saboteurs, the US requires both improved intelligence for preemption and counteraction, and better physical defenses for particularly vulnerable facilities. Whether for our own purposes or for helping a friend or ally, we need to bring all our ingenuity to bear on anticipating, deterring, preempting, or foiling such enemies.⁴¹ The US should expand anti-terrorist activities in the region by soliciting the close cooperation of regional intelligence and

counter-terrorist agencies. When possible, these ties should be put in the form of formal agreements and widely publicized.⁶² The US response to Libyan terrorism and other provocations was an example in which US interests dictated our assuming a direct military role to forestall and limit the spread of terrorism against the US.⁶³

Budget

Funding constraints will be the bottom line on the feasibility and capability of implementing the strategy that I have described. At the very least we must strive to maintain the current levels of US forces tasked to support the region while we make a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility and cost associated with the strategy.

We need a new sense of realism in Washington about the strategic purposes of our policies in the Middle East, both diplomatic and military, for the two are interrelated. US-Arab relations, as well as the US-Israeli bond, are an important dimension of US national interest, and a key to the ability to broker the peace process. That is why the real casualty, if the Congress ultimately deals the US out of military partnership in the Arab world, will be the peace process itself, a result equally damaging to Israel as well as moderate Arab states. So, as the US moves ahead with its diplomatic efforts, Americans will need to set aside some politically comforting illusions and proceed on the basis of a clear strategic understanding of US national interest. Changes are in the wind in the Middle East that may breathe new life into some old ideas for resolving the Palestinian problem and establishing peace among traditional enemies.

All parties involved must find the courage to face reality and seize this opportunity."⁶⁴

CHAPTER 5

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AVERAGE OIL WELL PRODUCING RATES

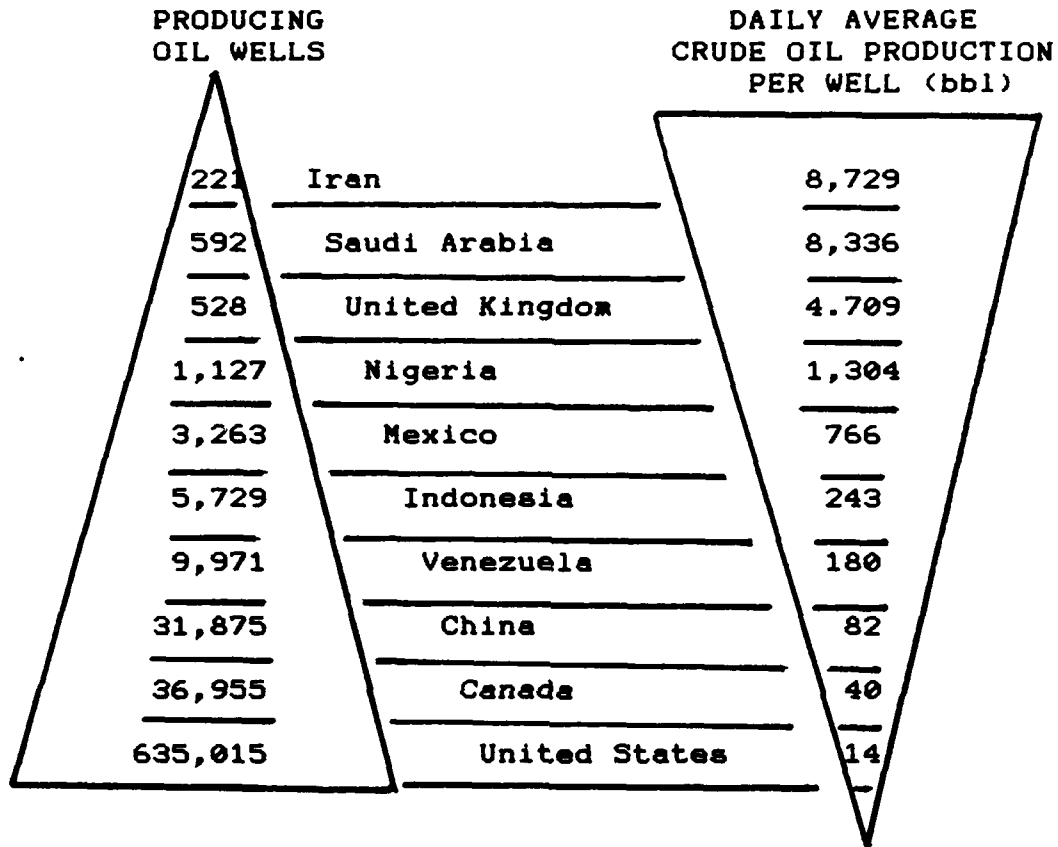


Figure 1

NATIONAL INTEREST MATRIX

BASIC INTEREST AT STAKE	INTENSITY OF INTEREST			
	SURVIVAL	VITAL	MAJOR	PERIPHERAL
DEFENSE OF HOMELAND				
ECONOMIC WELL BEING				
FAVORABLE WORLD ORDER				
PROMOTION OF VALUES				

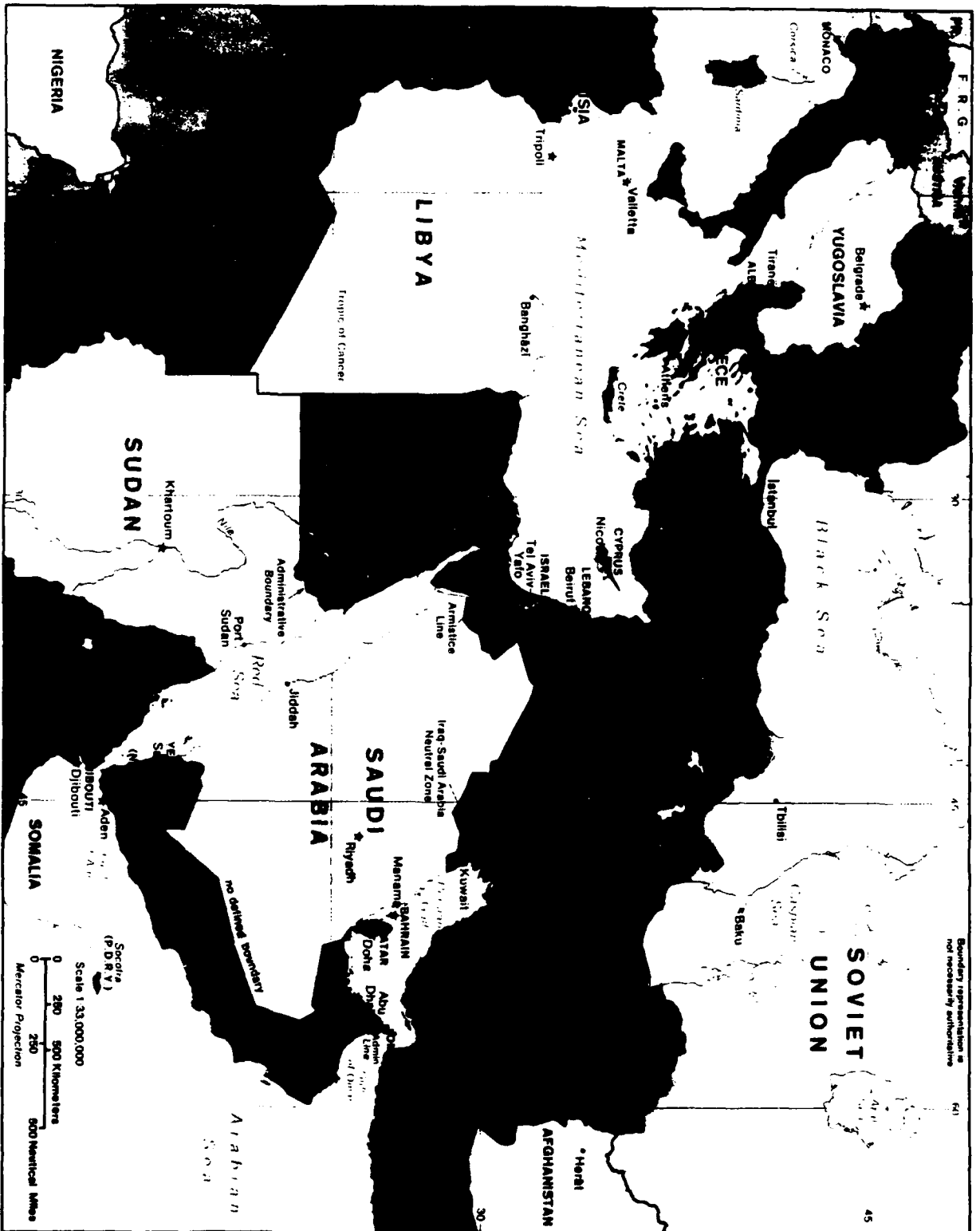
Figure 2

NATIONAL INTEREST MATRIX

BASIC INTEREST AT STAKE	INTENSITY OF INTEREST			
	SURVIVAL	VITAL	MAJOR	PERIPHERAL
DEFENSE OF HOMELAND			Saudi-Arabia Kuwait	Iran Iraq
ECONOMIC WELL BEING			Saudi-Arabia	Iran Iraq
FAVORABLE WORLD ORDER		Saudi-Arabia Kuwait	Iran Iraq	
PROMOTION OF VALUES				Saudi-Arabia Kuwait Iran Iraq

Figure 3

Middle East



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