



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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**A NEW APPROACH FOR KUWAIT'S
NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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This paper discusses Kuwait's new approach for designing a national military strategy by identifying the constraints, the restrictions on the "Defense Review Group" as an approved national military strategy, and the strategic concept (ways) for a better integration between the national security objective (ends) and the new military force (means) for the defense of Kuwait. The "Defense Review Group" is a combined team of Kuwaiti-American officers who conducted a strategic study in 1991 to rebuild Kuwait's armed forces after Desert Storm operations and designed Kuwait's national military strategy.

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A NEW APPROACH FOR KUWAIT'S NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, recorded a black pivotal point in Arabian and Islamic contemporary history. This brutal aggressive act shifted both Arabian and Islamic paths into critically, dangerous situations which weakened Kuwait's ability to face the regional power balance and threat.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was characterized as a barbarian style invasion. The occupation lasted seven months in which the invaders had the time to either loot or destroy all Kuwaiti governmental and societal foundations. The Kuwaiti armed forces were devastated from the first day of the invasion. Luckily some of the land force small units, as well as a large number of Kuwait Air Force aircraft and two Navy Missile cruisers, managed to withdraw to Saudi Arabia after heavy engagements with the enemy.¹

On March 26, 1991 after the glorious victory over Iraq by the coalition forces, the Kuwaiti National Military Command initiated strategic studies and plans to reconstruct and reorganize the armed forces according to the vision of the National Command Authority's guidance. To maximize the reconstruction effort, different military consultant teams were invited from the allied countries such as the UNITED KINGDOM., France, and the United States (Army and Marines) to consult with Kuwaiti teams to come up with bilateral proposals. The strategic study considered all aspects of resources and power in Kuwait such as geopolitics, politics, economy, and culture. After a thorough evaluation, the Kuwaiti-American proposal, which was called Defense Review Group (DRG) strategy was adopted by the military command and higher authority.

The DRG main elements consisted of three categories: weapon systems and manpower, finances for the acquisitions, and the allotted time of ten years for this program to be developed beginning in 1992 and coming to fruition in 2002.²

The primary objective was clearly to reconstruct the armed forces with the most suitable weapon systems and qualified manpower as a military force, but the concept of acquiring and providing the proper qualified manpower in quantity and quality was not satisfactory. Also the DRG strategy faced different constraints and restrictions.

There was no question about the need for a focused objective. The national security of Kuwait demands strong armed forces to pursue Kuwait's national interests as a military element of national power.

BRIEF HISTORY OF CONFLICT IN THE GULF

Before August 2, 1990, there was no identified enemy for Kuwait. At that time the common enemy of the Arab states was Israel. A lot of people thought Iran could have become the enemy, but there was no proof. The Shah of Iran played the role of the policeman in the Gulf and always claimed the Island of Bahrain as part of Iran. When the new Islamic regime took over in 1979, it had a different ideology, it was against secular rule of government. The Islamic revolution was successful in Iran, so its leaders thought the neighboring countries on the other side of the Gulf, as well as Iraq, should be influenced to follow its ideology.

This ideology posed a threat to the secular government, especially the royal families who were ruling all the Gulf states. It created political crises and internal sensitivity because of the Shi'a's population in the Gulf states, 70% in Bahrain, 55% in Iraq, 30% in Kuwait, 6.2% in Oman, 24.3% in Qatar, 8-10% in Saudi Arabia, and 15% in the UAE.³ There was no threat of using military power to influence their ideology.

In September 1980, Iraq launched a massive military attack against the new Islamic Republic of Iran. This war lasted a long eight years until 1988 and was a major loss for both countries. Neither gained anything but their common enemy Israel did. The Iranians came out of this feeling very sour towards the Gulf states especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who took sides with Iraq during the war. The eight-year war produced many dramatic consequences in both countries such as destroyed economies, unstable political situations, and refugees. Annex A –Iraq Chronology – shows the prolonged hostility of Iraq toward Kuwait.⁴ The lack of Kuwaiti leaderships political analysis of Iraq as an unstable state for the last five decades, made Kuwait very vulnerable to be the scapegoat for Saddam Hussien's regime. Iraq was suffering very badly after the eight year war with Iran. Iraq could have been defeated easily without the economic support of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and U.S. intelligence support at the time. An honest Kuwait officer indicated in his strategic research paper in the Jordanian Army Staff College in the late 1980s, that he expected Iraq to invade Kuwait in the wake of the eight year war. nobody had taken him seriously.

A DESIGNATED ENEMY IS IDENTIFIED

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait but was defeated in "Desert Storm" and Kuwait was liberated on February 26, 1991. Since August 1990, Iraq became the designated enemy of Kuwait. Although the war was over in the western sense, it was not in the Iraqi sense. It was only a cease-fire. Terms of the cease-fire of February 28, 1991 between the coalition forces and Iraq, called for Iraq to abide by all UN resolutions including the recognition of Kuwait as a sovereign state. The coalition did not seek a conditional surrender of Iraq, but a nonconditional

withdrawal from Kuwait. So for the Iraqi regime the conflict was still on. All they need to do was abide by the UN resolutions and prepare their army again to invade Kuwait or conduct any form of aggression to influence their will on Kuwait. Although Iraq already has sufficient access to the gulag, their goal is to occupy the Northern Islands of Kuwait for better access to the Gulf.

“Capabilities and intentions: A government needs to know what other governments could do to help or harm its state particularly in the military field, and also what non-military forms of aid or damage, for instance, economic, they could bring to bear on its interests. It also needs to know what other government seems likely to do. To be aware of what is possible and what the probabilities are, and to induce other governments to make favorable choices, is the object of foreign policy.”

—Adam Watson, 1983⁵

Since August 2, 1990, Kuwait faces two major threats. The most severe and critical is Iraq because it borders on Kuwaiti's northern and western flanks. The other less severe threat is Iran where the Persian Gulf acts as a natural buffer zone and keeps Iran at a safe distance. However, Iran is building a new naval Armada and buying new submarines. Kuwait, despite its small size, is strategically located in a critical geographical junction sitting astride the natural access route to be used by the large Iraqi or Iranian armies enroute to the Arabian Peninsula.

KUWAIT NATIONAL INTERESTS

The national interests of Kuwait and the U.S. coincide in the Middle East region as follows:

- a. Defense of homeland:
 - Regional stability.
 - Protection of citizens' property and sovereignty.
 - Security of key regional players.
- b. Economic well being:
 - Access to markets and trade.
 - Economic stability in the region.
- c. Favorable world order:
 - Support Arab-Israeli Peace Process.
 - Bilateral defense agreement and relations.
 - Control spread of terrorism.
 - Growth of democracy especially in the Gulf.
 - Conflict resolution through regional allies, regional organizations (GCC, Arab league, Islamic conference), and international organizations.
 - No WMD proliferation (a free region from WMD).

- d. Promotion of values:
 - Protections of human rights.
 - Growth of democratic values.⁶

REFORMATION OF KUWAIT IS THE SOLUTION

POLITICS

When the Iraqis invaded Kuwait, they didn't look at the typical Kuwaiti as part of different categories; such as, first or second category, Shiite or Sunni, Kuwaiti citizen or non Kuwaiti citizen, third country nationals serving in the military or any other sector. The enemy simply looked at all Kuwaitis as residents of a future state of Iraq. To their surprise the mix of defenders all loved and defended Kuwait with great honor and courage. The common code of defense of the homeland motivated them.

Important lessons were learned from the Iraqi invasion, occupation, and subservient liberation of the homeland. For Kuwait, it was a golden opportunity to reform based on great solid principles of national security. We have a constitution based on a great religion and great people who believe in democracy. There are different types of democracies based on culture: Islamic style, western or eastern style, or any form of government supportive of national freedom based on its beliefs and historical culture. Our system is a constitutional monarchy with a parliament based on a constitution that defines the ruler Kuwait as a Prince from the Royal Family. The Kuwaitis decided in 1752 that the Al-Sabah family would be the ruling family in Kuwait.

Kuwait gained its independence in 1961, the constitution was ratified in November 1962, and the first parliament was elected in 1963. The Crown Prince is usually appointed by the Amir as Prime Minister to form the government. It has become a custom for certain ministries to have only members of the royal family appointed as chiefs, such as the ministries of defense, interior (internal security including police), information, and foreign affairs (state department). Nevertheless, the royal family members can be appointed to any other ministries as well. According to the constitution, 3-9 of the 50 elected members of parliament are appointed by the prime minister to form the government's cabinet.⁷ It is a unique system which the Kuwaitis are very proud of it since Kuwait is the only Gulf State with a parliament in which the people play a role and have a say in the government, to include the functioning of municipalities.

The Kuwaitis are very ambitious and want to develop higher standards of living in their country, according to their values and the national interest. The Kuwaitis had high expectations after the liberation and saw this opportunity as a major turning point to amend the constitution and other government regulations. These amendments would present a better way to rebuild a

new Kuwait with a new vision and image based on high moral values and the principles of Islam.

Reformation of Kuwait has many aspects that I don't need to cover in my essay. My principal concerns are military and security issues as to support the will of the people and the capability of Kuwait's armed forces to carry out its duties. While it is a disadvantage that the military in Kuwait can't vote for the parliament, individuals can resign temporarily to run as a candidate.⁸ It is a procedure that has been practiced and some of the officers do make it to the parliament. There is a defense and interior committee within the national assembly that deals with military issues concerning defense and internal security.

The Kuwaiti ambition is to see higher and better qualification standards set up for key positions in the government's cabinet as well as the special committees within the national assembly. The Kuwaiti parliament is set up differently than the U.S. Congress where you have the Senate and the House of Representatives.

SOCIAL

By looking at Figure 1 there are different factors affecting the process of the military strategy.⁹ Each must be considered very carefully. The most critical factor we are now facing in Kuwait is the culture and society. Kuwait doesn't have a large indigenous population to put together a large national army. Regulations limit other nationalities from joining the armed forces. Women have never served in the military since the Kuwaiti society is very conservative and men and women are not mixed in many areas of the society. The ability to build such an army goes beyond the manpower resources available at this time. The society has never been through consecutive conflicts since it was established in the 18th Century. The Kuwaitis always have enjoyed a quite, peaceful life in the Arabian Peninsula, believing the Arabs and the Muslims are our blood brothers.

Now have to be realistic, we were betrayed by Arab neighbors, an Arab state we shared our wealth with. Who should we trust now? First we have to believe in ourselves as a society and a government. We need to face reality of the new threat in our region. We should set an ideal example for the world that we deserve respect and trust to be supported by the free world to protect our sovereignty. We need to militarize our nation. We want every citizen to have a sense of national security. As the Crown Prince/Prime Minister Shiekh Sa'ad Al-abdulla Al-Sabah has mentioned many times that "every citizen is a guard on duty" which means we should look out for each other and care for each other. Kuwait is ours and we are the guardians.

Militarizing the whole society may be difficult within our culture, but I believe it is a must. We should start with a (White Revolution) first. A white revolution or intellectual revolution would change the way we live, do business, work, and teach, effecting all aspects of our life. It would allow us to adapt our lives to the national security rather than the life Kuwaitis are accustomed to according to the culture. The government should accept the idea and work it out through the National Assembly to come out with a national strategy to reform. Again Shiekh Sa'ad Al-Sabah quoted "the Kuwaitis must support the Fourth Wall project to protect Kuwait." Kuwait used to have three walls in the past, which were built in different years to protect itself from the invaders of the past. The gates of the third and last wall remained as a national symbol. The newest project was to build a huge deep trench around Kuwait supported by different barriers. This project was proposed after the liberation and was approved. Different phases of the project have been completed. But in the military sense the project will not protect Kuwait tactically because the extreme weather we have, such as sand storms, can fill up the trenches easily or enemy engineers can cross the trench.

I have looked at this fourth wall project in a different way. Instead of building a fourth physical wall, the effort should have been concentrated on the human wall within the society. Building a real fourth wall composed of the Kuwaiti people would make the nation stronger. The big effort should have been directed to the national will of the people to support their patriotism and keep their moral high to participate in the country's reformation and rebuilding with a new vision and image.

MILITARY

The DRG produced a very good strategy to be implemented fully, but it needs supporting strategies to help execute it, especially the manpower deficiency. I would propose the following strategy for recruiting the manpower:

a. Government should:

(1) Establish a new regulation to restrict the police force and the National Guard from recruiting any more citizens (male) and put a certain limit on their size. Further, to only recruit specialists and females, as necessary.

(2) Establish a new regulation also for all civil work departments to not accept any male applications unless the job specialty is on demand.

(3) Encourage citizens to join the army on the basis that better incentives would be available such as health care, guaranteed housing options, shopping and recreational facilities, military discounts on national domestic services, and many other options the government can provide and afford to recruit more manpower.

(4) Get the military ready to recruit women into the armed forces in addition to the civil servants in place now. Not only in order to obtain valuable benefits from the military, but also to include their valuable service for the national security.

(5) Amend the role of the National Guard to train and operate with the Army, air, and navy forces in functional roles, including combat, combat support and combat service support roles.

b. Military Education: Education, generally speaking, is the key for a better society and qualified military personnel (male and female) to operate current technology and to deal with the new information age.

(1) The government should help build military high schools for the grades of 9-12. The schools should be within the military installations such as at an academy where other major and supporting schools are available. By the time the students graduate from the 12th grade, they would be granted the NCO grade. Because the students have been militarized through a four year program, they are now ready to transition into weapon systems, provided they have gone through an aptitude test to verify their preferences according to their ability.

(2) The top 10% of the high school graduates would be granted scholarships for colleges in Kuwait University or abroad, and then would serve the military after graduation as commissioned officers.

(3) The top 10% of college graduates would have priority for post-graduate school after serving four years or more as commissioned officers.

(4) Change the present military academy into a four year program to grant a bachelors degree credited by Kuwait University, and also to become a commissioned officer upon graduation.

(a) Top 10% graduates would have priority for post graduate school in Kuwait or abroad after four years of service or more.

(b) Raise high school grade qualification standards to be accepted at the military academy from 60 to 70%.

(c) High school graduates with less than 70% of final grades will be accepted at the NCO academy which should be a two year program to grant a college degree.

(d) The top 10% of graduates would join the military academy for another two years to be commissioned officers.

(e) Establish ROTC programs at Kuwait University to be eligible to join the military and get commissioned.

(f) Support the existing OTS (Officer Training School) for university graduates who have not gone through ROTC.

c. Professional Education:

(1) Kuwait Armed Forces Command and Staff College is now two years old. It is co-managed and co-directed by a British military and Kuwait academic task team. The Kuwait Army has taken a great step forward with this approach. Definitely a lot of work and effort is needed to transition the management gradually into Kuwaiti hands. The Kuwait Army has always encouraged and supported the idea of a combined professional education with the GCC countries, as part of collective security within the GCC charter, and share the burden of the expenses of facilities and professional academic and military instructors. Most of the GCC militaries have their own command and staff colleges, so the investment would be in the exchange of students and faculty to enhance better military integration and a better way to implement GCC military strategy for unified doctrine.

(2) Select qualified officers to attend war colleges around the world to prepare strategic leaders for the future.

(3) Officer squadron schools (S.O.S.) or junior staff schools are very important to start leadership and military professions as early as possible.

The above proposal for recruiting human resources is based on the Kuwait national statistics of 1996 which indicate that some of the civil servant departments are over employed and some of them have reached maximum capacity, which is a good sign for the government to shift the employment toward the military.¹⁰ Other nationalities can be used in the civil service departments with Kuwaiti supervision. It is the Kuwaiti constitution which grants every Kuwaiti citizen a job, free education, free health care, housing, and many benefits because of the state wealth capacity which make the citizens very dependent on the government by being employed within its civil service departments in large numbers.¹¹

The proposal can start with a small male number like 100 (company size) for the high school project and work on it as the time goes by for better assessment. Then extend the proposal to the female militarization in small numbers and work it out. Once this concept is accepted as a way to recruit and educate the new manpower, the task team in charge at J-7 should prioritize different programs according to the available resources.

This concept is a step forward and a very imaginative initiative. It is considered active engagement with the society, instead of just waiting for the people to volunteer for the military. It is the other way around, the military should go out and reach the people and tell them what the military is all about. It is not training for combat only, it is the quality of education and

training, it is a family caring community, for better life standards by promoting values and high ethical standards.

FIGURE 1

KUWAIT HIERARCHY FOR STRATEGY PROCESS AND POLICY

HIERARCHY OF PRINCIPLES OF DOCTRINE

		LEVELS & TYPES OF STRATEGY (ENDS-WAYS-MEANS)	LEVELS & TYPES OF POLICIES
1	NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL	NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY	NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY (PRESIDENTIAL DECISION DOCUMENTS)
2	HIGHER DEFENSE COUNCIL	DEFENSE STRATEGY	DEFENSE POLICY
3	MILITARY COUNCIL	NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY	COMBATANT POLICIES
4	JOINT OPERATIONAL COMMAND	JOINT STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES PLAN	DEPARTMENT/COMMANDS OF SEPARATE ARMED FORCES POLICIES
5	SERVICES COMMAND	THEATER AND FUNCTIONAL COMBATANT STRATEGIES	TRADOC POLICIES

THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL ASSESSMENT

We do have a mislinkage in Kuwait between authority levels one to three. Actually we don't have a permanent National Security Council that can translate national objectives into national security strategy by coordinating all national security means like the military, the economy, and the political aspects. Also, the council can propose and advise some recommendations for the NCA. The Kuwaiti hierarchy for the national security is as follows:

- a. First level - National Security Council (national security strategy): is not available now, but there was some initiative to conclude the project by at least identifying the national security

adviser. In the meanwhile there is some debate whether it is needed for Kuwait since it is a very small country with a small armed forces and the second level of hierarchy exist.

b. Second Level - Higher Defense Council (defense strategy):

- (1) Crown Prince/Prime Minister - Chairman
- (2) Secretary of Defense
- (3) Secretary of State Department (foreign affairs)
- (4) Secretary of Interior (internal security)
- (5) Secretary of Public Health
- (6) Secretary of Transportation and Communication
- (7) Secretary of Information
- (8) Commander of the National Guard
- (9) Chief of Staff
- (10) Under Secretary of Interior (police)

The Higher Defense Council does not convene regularly unless there is a need.

c. Third Level - Military Council (national military strategy):

- (1) Chief of Staff
- (2) Deputy Chief of Staff
- (3) J-3/5
- (4) J-1
- (5) J-2
- (6) J-4 (includes acquisition)
- (7) J-7 (military education)
- (8) JAG
- (9) Land Force
- (10) Air Force
- (11) Navy Force
- (12) J-6 and other separate units as required.

The military council does convene weekly to discuss national military issues and combatant policies.

d. Fourth Level - Joint Operation Command (joint operational strategy): Every individual department and separate services convene weekly or once every two weeks.

e. Fifth Level - Services Commands (battlefield strategy/tactics): It depends on unit sizes. Once every two weeks is a good idea to link up with higher command updates on policies, strategy, training, and combat readiness.

I believe having a permanent National Security Council is a good idea so that this top level council can concentrate on defining and implementing the national objectives and the national security strategy involving all elements of national power. It would be a perfect mechanism to adopt new national plans such as the proposal to recruit human resources for the military through different programs that I have described. It's also a perfect mechanism to carry out the national plan of militarizing the whole society as proposed. The National Security Council is a perfect decisionmaking tool to handle domestic and national crises by tasking available security forces such as joint military, police, and National Guard command posts.

CONCLUSION

Kuwait was invaded in August 1990 by Iraq. The invasion and the occupation have devastated the armed forces and the country's main foundation. Iraq became the designated enemy of Kuwait. The invasion had a devastating impact on the whole Kuwaiti society where different nationalities used to live in Kuwait including 400,000 Palestinians, Jordanians, Yemenies and Sudanies, whose governments sided with Iraq. Kuwait was liberated in February 1991 and had to go through major cycles to rebuild and reform. The military had approved national strategy for rebuilding the armed forces in ten years, 1992-2002. But the plan faced some constraints causing it to be amended to 2007. The new strategy called DRG-1992 had overlooked some important factors such as a strategy to recruit human resources and the evaluation of leadership within the military. There were other factors outside the military that have affected the conduct of the DRG strategy such as domestic politics, international politics, and the will of the society.

In this paper the DRG strategy constraints have been identified and a new supporting strategy has been proposed as a means to fulfill the DRG strategy. The second proposal is to establish a new National Security Council which would be able to adopt and carry out national strategies such as militarizing Kuwait society as one means of reforming with a new vision and image. This paper has described the ideal reformation of Kuwait as taking the Israeli model of conducting national security strategy. The reformation ideas have touched the three major pillars of the society; political reformation, white (intellectual) revolution to militarize the society as an (out of the box) means, and a professional military development to have a strong armed forces based on quality and profession of arms, and supported by the will of the Kuwaitis'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To develop a well defined chain of command and control for the national strategy process as indicated in Figure 1.

- The government should look into a new reformation strategy to rebuild and reconstruct the society and the military on solid principles and a combat basis to face regional threats.

- The military has to establish a task team to carry out the DRG-1992 strategy for better assessment to identify the shortfalls very early and take proper action.

- The Higher Defense Council has to adopt:

- a. A new strategy to recruit human resources by reaching out to motivate the society and providing a new way of life for the military to complement the military manpower deficiency.

- b. The idea of recruiting females to be in the military, national guard, and police besides the civil servants who are supporting different military organizations.

- The military council and the higher defense council have to adopt an identical doctrine until a new Kuwaiti military doctrine can be established by a qualified team.

- Kuwaiti officials and the military have to enforce the code of conduct in all aspects of work, and enforce the Inspector General's role for checks and balances, and for better assessment to carry out strategies and implementing policies.

- The National Guard and the police force have to come under the Joint Chief of Staff's authority during contingencies and national crises for better control and usage of national security means.

- The military has to carry out:

- a. Professional education is the key to developing military leaders who would in turn develop the military organizations.

- b. Quality education and training which is an investment to have well qualified soldiers able to deal with high tech weapon systems and the information age.

- c. Better ways to promote officer and NCOs based on merits, qualifications, and good conduct, not the present old fashion way that is based on seniority only.

- d. A new system for retirement so the new ambitious officers and NCOs have a chance to be promoted for higher positions by selection based on qualifications to lead, command, guide, and to implement new ideas for better development of the military.

WORD COUNT = 4631

ENDNOTES

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