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SAUDI ARABIA FACES THE 1980s

Saudi Security Problems and American Interests

Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr.
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INTRODUCTION

The Saudi government's June 1980 request to Washington for missiles, bomb racks, and extra fuel tanks for their 60 F-15 Eagle jet fighters forces the question which has hung over the United States since the Shah left Iran in January 1979, namely: By what policies, and through which policy outcomes, can American security interests best be served in the Persian/Arabian Gulf* and the Middle East generally?

The Teheran hostage crisis and the Soviet military invasion of Afghanistan have served to heighten this country's awareness of the hostility and ruthlessness of its adversaries, be they xenophobic mullahs or mechanized Red Army divisions. But the high drama generated in 1980 by the Carter Doctrine and later by the aborted hostage rescue mission has diverted attention from other critical issues--issues which may very likely determine the future status of U.S. "vital interests" in the Gulf.

To most Americans, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is little more than an expanse of desert inhabited by princely sheikhs. It is common knowledge that the Saudis supply much of the oil--more than nine million barrels a day--which runs America's industries, homes and automobiles. It is also no secret that the rising price of OPEC oil affects the entire United States economy and makes certain Arab governments, among them Saudi Arabia, enormously wealthy.

* hereafter, "the Gulf"

But beyond that, how much do we know about King Khalid, Crown Prince Fahd, Prince Abdullah, Prince Sultan, Prince Saud, Prince Muhammed, and the other 4,000 princes of the House of Saud, who regard America as their guardian of last resort? Should the provision of ultra-sophisticated weaponry be a cornerstone of United States policy toward Saudi Arabia?

To answer this question, we must first consider the view from Riyadh. There is today a complex tangle of military, political, religious, social and economic issues shaping the course of events in the Middle East, and Saudi Arabia is trapped in the crossfire. This paper will attempt to explore the royal family's perspective on security-related issues at three geographically-distinct but otherwise inseparable levels: inside the Saudi kingdom itself; throughout the Middle East; and finally at the global level, involving the superpowers and Europe.

After reviewing and examining the multitude of uncertainties facing the Saudi leaders in 1980, it will be clear that the American decision to sell or to withhold the F-15 accessories involves much more than the weapons inventory of the Saudi Air Force, or even its capability to deter an attack on the oilfields. Upon realizing all of the local, regional and global crosscurrents pulling at King Khalid and his princes from seemingly every direction, we will hopefully appreciate more fully the delicacy with which Saudi policy tradeoffs need to be juggled in Riyadh in order for the conservative monarchy to stay afloat.

I. THREATS INSIDE THE KINGDOM

The legitimacy of the Saudi monarchy rests principally upon two pillars: guardianship of Islamic values; and ties of royal kinship with members of all of the tribes in the desert kingdom. The country's political roots date back to the mid-1700s, when the historically-powerful Saud clan, from the interior Nejd region of the Arabian peninsula, formed a religious-military confederacy with the puritanical Sunni Muslim followers of Mohammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. After a century of preeminence in central Arabia, the Saud-led Wahhabis were driven eastward into what is today Kuwait by rival northern Shamman tribesmen.

From 1902 to 1906 Ibn Saud, the founding father of Saudi Arabia, mounted a successful campaign to force these enemy occupiers and their Turkish protectors out of the Nejd. For the next twenty years, Ibn Saud expanded his dominion, overtaking the Shamman tribesmen to the north, Turkish troops to the north and east, and finally, British-armed Hashemite tribes to the west, which had themselves expelled Turkish occupiers and established hegemony from the holy cities of Mecca and Medina northward to Iraq and Transjordan.

By 1926 Ibn Saud ruled Arabia from the Red Sea to the Gulf, and his 1932 decree established the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In roaming and conquering this vast territory, Ibn Saud had rallied fanatical Wahhabi zealots in virtually every tribe

to fight for his cause; additionally, he had fathered more than 45 sons by women in 15 of these tribes.¹ Thus the bonds which originally united the peoples of Saudi Arabia are devotion to Islam and kinship to their king; and today, the Saudi political system continues to rest upon these two pillars.

Of the world's seventy-odd countries housing significant Muslim populations, only Saudi Arabia can claim a 100 percent Muslim populace.² Islam permeates Saudi political life at every level. The king enjoys great prestige as the protector of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. This elevated status in the Muslim world carries with it an implicit responsibility to faithfully preserve and exemplify Islamic ideals and traditions for future generations.

The Muslim clergy, or ulema, implement the al-Sharia, which is Islam's very comprehensive legal code of conduct. There is a religious police force, the al-Matawah, to enforce daily adherence to the word of Allah. In exercising his religious duties, the king is himself ultimately accountable to an Islamic institution called ahl al-aqd wal hal, which entrusts approximately 100 princes and 60 senior ulema with a supreme oversight function. (It was this body which saw fit to transfer the crown from King Saud to his brother Faisal in 1964.)

Regarding the second element of political legitimacy, kinship to the king, again one finds institutions which promote unity and loyalty among the Saudi peoples. In 1952, one year before his death, Ibn Saud introduced the majlis, a system of informal democracy which grants every subject in the kingdom

the right of access to the royal family. The humblest tribesman can and does air his grievances while sharing a meal with the king or, for that matter, any member of the family. A second "bridge" between the princes and the people is the class of proud and patriotic Ikhwan (or "brethren"), drawn from the Bedouin tribes of the Nejd which had originally provided Ibn Saud with his missionary army. The Ikhwan serve in all of the royal households and provide an invaluable conduit of information between the rulers and the ruled.

These simple foundations of stability face a growing challenge in the 1980s. Saudi Arabia's oil reserves, believed to be the world's largest, have brought the kingdom great new influence and wealth--and even greater new responsibilities. Today the king must wear several leadership hats at once, as his Islamic role is augmented by ever-increasing strategic, political and financial power in the Gulf and far beyond. For better or worse, he has inherited the twin burdens of reliably supplying much of the West's oil while prudently dispensing the hundreds of billions of petrodollar revenues.

As a result, irreversible forces of change are at work inside Saudi Arabia, forces which place the traditional political and social order in serious jeopardy. This chapter will disaggregate the internal threat to the monarchy, although one should not necessarily view the components as mutually discrete.

A. Modernity versus Traditionalism

A generation of young elite Saudis has familiarized itself with Western ideas and lifestyles. Oil revenues have enabled royal family members and thousands of other wealthy Saudis to travel, study, and conduct business in Europe and America. Many have come to enjoy the West's more liberal social milieu and appreciate its more egalitarian democratic traditions. Increasingly, Westernized Saudis are pressing for modernization at home.

Within the ruling circles, the majority view is that the oil wealth must be converted into tangible assets--universities, transportation facilities, energy and resource infrastructural systems--instead of being left to passively earn interest in money markets abroad.³ The unprecedented scale of Saudi Arabia's newest five-year plan--\$250 billion--indicates that the ambitious reformers have prevailed in the policymaking process.

A growing urban middle class of educated technocrats, working in the public and private sectors, stands to become wealthier and more powerful from this process of modernization and expansion. Yet in future years the children of today's architects and engineers, having studied in the West and returned home, will probably retain less devotion than their parents to traditional Muslim values as practiced for centuries in Arabia. Furthermore, this generation could one day lose patience with the less-than-democratic nature of the Saudi monarchy itself.

Fearing this Western trend, conservative ulema and princes

alike have resisted modernization. King Khalid's full brother Prince Muhammed has opposed the rapid development plans because they necessitate opening up the country to foreign influences which could erode and eventually supercede Islamic ways.⁴ On November 20, 1979, a loose coalition of clandestine puritanical Wahhabi groups, an ad hoc army numbering 500 men, invaded the Grand Mosque in Mecca and demanded a purge of pro-Western princes and their foreign military advisors from the government and a return to a "pure" Islamic society. Since then, the single most unsettling issue in the kingdom has been whether Saudi Arabia can survive the transformation into a technologically-advanced state without compromising Muslim values and destabilizing the king's authoritarian "rule-by-consensus." The polarization already witnessed on this core issue is very likely just a preview of much stormier discord in future years.

B. Distributional Problems

Saudi Arabia has five regions: the Nejd, in the center, including Riyadh; the Hijaz, in the mountainous west, including Mecca, Medina, and the Red Sea ports; Asir, in the relatively temperate southwest; the northern province, combining several sparsely-populated zones; and the Al Hasa province, along the oil-rich east coast bordering the Gulf.

Within the Al Hasa province is concentrated Saudi Arabia's entire petroleum industry, along with most of its commercial activity, investment, and development projects--in short, a

grossly disproportionate share of the country's wealth. This regional inequity only becomes sharper each year as oil revenues steadily climb, exceeding \$90 billion in 1979 alone. As a result, to quote a Western journalist familiar with the concerns of Saudi officials, "...social, political, and economic jealousies are growing acute among citizens to the north, south, and west."⁵

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of this regional jealousy is the widespread perception of corruption in the royal family, as evidenced by frequently-aired allegations that the princes handling the kingdom's development plans are lining their own pockets with gold at the country's expense. Stories of \$100 million commissions for arranging massive contract awards, and multi-billion-dollar profits from land speculation based upon advance knowledge of major future infrastructural construction plans, have tainted the immediate families of some very senior figures, including Crown Prince Fahd, the king's half-brother. Says James E. Akins, former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, "...without dramatic internal reforms, the country faces serious problems, as the feelings about corruption are similar to developing feelings in Iran in 1976-77."⁶

There is a classic dilemma at the heart of the distributional question. On the one hand, Saudi rulers have acknowledged that the oil wealth must be shared amongst the country's regions. In this spirit, plans for twin ultra-modern industrial cities, on the west coast at Yenbo and on the east coast at Jubail, have been given special priority. Yet on the other hand, the emerg-

ence of huge new commercial and bureaucratic centers across the kingdom is likely to bring about a gradual devolution of power--political as well as economic--from Riyadh and Al Hasa, leading in time perhaps to greater, not lesser, regional rivalry.

The same tradeoff, if viewed in a class context, yields even more profound implications. As the gap between rich and poor widens and the charges of princely corruption become more acrimonious, King Khalid must judge whether the rising expectations of his poorest subjects--satisfied by his largesse at present,⁷ perhaps, but learning to aspire for more--will still permit total submission to the monarchy in a future era of much higher national literacy and social/political consciousness. By keeping the wealth in the family, as it were, the king would leave his potential domestic detractors relatively powerless, if bitter; by spreading the wealth throughout the kingdom, he is instead gambling that the privileged monarchy will survive the imponderable passage to modernity.

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C. Forces of Opposition

Having reviewed the basic dynamics of stability and change, we turn now to specific groups whose differences with the Saudi leadership pose potential threats to it.

1. Foreign Workers

According to the Ministry of Planning, 40 percent of Saudi jobs are held by foreigners.⁸ There are over one million Yemenis in the kingdom doing mostly manual labor, and lesser numbers

of Palestinians, Pakistanis, Egyptians, South Koreans, Japanese, Americans and Europeans. Given the ever-expanding scope of the country's development plans, there is no question but that the proportion of foreign-to-indigenous workers in the kingdom must continually rise to keep pace with new construction.⁹

The indigenous Saudi population of roughly four million¹⁰ is inhibited from contributing more manpower by three factors: low rates (by Arab standards) of reproduction; social traditions which adjudge most manual labor for both sexes to be demeaning; and the orthodox Muslim prohibition against women working in public (which has been more strictly enforced since the Grand Mosque insurgency, although Saudi women continue to pursue education).

The opportunities for employment are thus plentiful and attractive enough to draw masses of workers from the anemic economy in North Yemen and elsewhere. But foreign workers are denied many of the rights, privileges and benefits granted to Saudi nationals. For example, as part of his above-mentioned campaign to share the nation's wealth among his subjects, King Khalid recently granted indigenous workers the opportunity to buy out the government's equity in the companies which employ them. Numerous perquisites of Saudi citizenship, such as free education, are similarly denied to foreign labor, while strict immigration quotas and ever-present threats of deportation for the slightest misconduct only reinforce their sense of victimization.

The more highly-skilled non-Arab workers brought in by foreign (mostly Western) firms under contract to the Saudi government must, along with their families, live in company compounds, fully segregated from Saudi society; yet in spite of their restricted lifestyles,¹¹ these company people--approximately 750,000 in all--pose no security problem. It is the unskilled and semi-skilled Arab workers, particularly those working in and around the oilfields by the Gulf, whose mounting resentment of "second-class status" creates an ugly dilemma for the government.

To admit two million or more immigrant workers as full Saudi citizens could cause enormous problems of sudden assimilation into the society. But as Adeed I. Dawisha, a noted Iraqi expert on Saudi security issues, points out, the present discriminatory policy is no less risky:

It...seems clear that, as long as immigrant workers continue to be excluded from the full social and economic benefits and opportunities the state extends to Saudi nationals, such friction is bound to manifest itself in a growing confrontation that may eventually undermine the stability of Saudi Arabia's social and political systems. ¹²

2. Alienated Shi'ites

Near the major oil facilities along the Gulf coast lives a minority pocket of Shi'ite Muslim Saudis, estimates of whose numbers range from 125,000 to over 400,000.¹³ Unlike the majority Wahhabis, who are Sunni Muslims, the Shi'ites--who make up 40 to 60 percent¹⁴ of the work force in the oil fields--harbor natural sympathies for the Shi'ite Islamic revolution across

the Gulf in Iran. Recent disturbances in the eastern province have aroused government concern over the vulnerability of the oilfields to possible work stoppages or even sabotage by Shi'ites mobilized in opposition to the royal family.

In 1970, the predominantly Shi'ite town of Al Qatif, to the north of Dhahran, was quarantined for a month by government forces following protests against the monarchy; a similar confrontation in 1978 led to 50 arrests and a number of executions. But only since the Ayatollah Khomeini's triumphant return to Iran in early 1979 has the Saudi Shi'ite minority adopted a militantly subversive posture contesting the king's rule.

On December 3-5, 1979, two weeks after the Mecca Grand Mosque attack (and five weeks after the seizure of U.S. Embassy hostages in Teheran), thousands of Saudi Shi'ites--many bearing placards with Khomeini's picture--demonstrated in the oil region towns of Al Qatif and Khafji, and near the major Ras Tanura refinery complex. They chanted for a more equitable distribution of wealth, and demanded that the royal family support Iran's Islamic revolution. In response, the government reportedly moved in 20,000 National Guard troops to quell the uprising; at least five of the demonstrators are said to have been killed, and hundreds arrested.¹⁵

On January 7, 1980, Teheran Radio beamed the first of several broadcasts across the Gulf demanding "death to the criminal and mercenary government of the Saudi family," whose members "are

forcefully using all of the vast wealth of the land for their own gain."¹⁶ For two days in early February, the eastern Shi'ites demonstrated once again, this time calling upon the authorities to release their fellow marchers jailed since the December incidents.¹⁷ Although this minority is quite small, the royal family is fully aware that the daily flow of Saudi oil--the kingdom's lifeline--depends critically upon the willingness of the Shi'ite labor force to operate the wells and refineries.

3. Sout al-Taliah--"Voice of the Vanguard"

Founded in 1973, this is a group of leftist Saudis outside the country whose aim is to do away with traditionalism in the kingdom. Sout al-Taliah is financially supported by some of the 13,000 Saudi students in the United States. According to the Washington Post, they "use the language of nationalism and human rights rather than that of Islamic fundamentalism, attacking compulsory mosque attendance and calling for a democratic presidential system to replace the ruling royal family."¹⁸

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The royal family has responded to these and other democratic pressures. In March 1980, the government announced that King Khalid had authorized the formation of a nine-man commission (one prince, seven ulema, and one layman) to draw up two "charters": one for a national system of government, based on statutes derived from Islamic Sharia law; and the second for a "consultative council," or shura, to be composed of 50

to 70 members.¹⁹ Whether the royal family's substantive ruling powers will actually be transferred or even influenced by these new institutions is not clear from Riyadh's announcement; in all likelihood, any purported changes will turn out to be essentially cosmetic.

At this stage, Sout al-Taliah represents not a threat to stability, but a warning that Western education of ever larger numbers of Saudi youth is likely to create an unprecedented political dialogue, one which could eventually lead to a peaceable or forcible democratization of the traditional monarchical system of governing the kingdom. For the time being, the more active opposition to the king comes from the opposite end of the social/political spectrum--the fundamentalists.

4. "the movement"

"We are not Saudis. We are the people of the Arabian peninsula, as we were before the Al-Saud family started to rule us, and as we shall be after they have gone."²⁰ So stated Nasser al-Saeed, leader of the Arabian Peninsula People's Union (APPU), nine days after the invasion of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in November 1979. The APPU, said al-Saeed, is just one of many diverse strands in a loose umbrella grouping known as "the movement," whose common bond is opposition to the Saudi royal family. Other component groups include: elements within five Bedouin tribes, most notably the sizable Oteiba and Kahtani tribes; secret cells of disaffected officers

and lesser-ranking soldiers in both the Saudi army and the National Guard; members of the Saudi intelligence service; university students; and immigrant workers.²¹

The "facts" surrounding the Grand Mosque insurgency are difficult to verify; no doubt they have been somewhat distorted by rampant speculation and hearsay. Interpretations of the event's significance have likewise been liberally mixed with wishful thinking on the part of government officials and would-be revolutionaries alike, not to mention partisan spectators from afar. But before we can dismiss the Mecca affair as the isolated and irrational act of unorganized religious zealots--the official Saudi position--it behooves us to review certain details which have emerged since November 1979.²²

As early as three months before the Mecca incident, Saudi authorities had questioned several junior officers in the army and even young princes suspected of disloyalty to the government. A number of officer arrests occurred in September 1979. "The movement," meanwhile, turned up in virtually every corner of the kingdom, distributing subversive literature and creating disturbances in Dhahran to the east, in the central Nejd region, in the northwestern city of Tabuq, and in Medina. The National Guard and the army were placed on partial alert in the last week of September. On November 10, Saudi police in Mecca and Medina rounded up and detained 1,500 known participants in the recent unrest. Since the yearly hajj (or pilgrimage) to Mecca was at its peak, "movement" leaders capitalized on

the moment by organizing a peaceful protest at the Grand Mosque; 800 men, women and children took part and soon became engaged in protracted clashes with local police.

On November 16, four days before invading the Holy Mosque, armed clandestine rebel groups from the most puritanical Wahhabi tribes scattered themselves throughout the Mecca/Medina region, including Yenbo and the area's lesser towns, to recruit new sympathizers. (Many of the foreign insurgents--from Egypt, Sudan, North Yemen, South Yemen, Iraq and Kuwait--who were subsequently listed by the Saudi Interior Ministry as having been captured and executed, are believed to have joined the movement at this stage.) The defection of numbers of army and National Guard troops enabled the rebels to enter and raid local military armories. This explains the initially-mystifying appearance of seven truckloads of weapons, many of them American-made, as the Mosque was besieged. The insurgents' other weapons, of Czech and Soviet origin, are believed to have been smuggled in gradually from Lebanon, Iraq and North Yemen.

In addition to the 500 gunmen who attacked in Mecca on November 20, a second rebel faction simultaneously raided Medina. Here, however, the movement suffered hundreds of casualties at the hands of regular troops which had been deployed there on alert since September. Still a third, ^{ously} contingent is said to have attacked just southeast of Mecca at Taif, in hopes of capturing King Khalid; but the king had altered his travel plans and was elsewhere.

The government's handling of the Mecca affair is worth reviewing. With Crown Prince Fahd out of the country, and National Guard chief Prince Abdullah also unavailable, the burden of dealing with the crisis fell to King Khalid, whose poor health had reduced his daily participation in governmental affairs to a minimum. Upon the advice of armed forces commander Prince Sultan, the fourth-ranking royal family member, Khalid asked the leading ulema to allow the Saudi army to carry weapons into the Grand Mosque. More than three hours passed before any counter-insurgency personnel arrived at the Mosque, and fully twenty-four before a decision was taken in Riyadh as to the appropriate response. Even then, it took three more days to prepare army troops to storm the Mosque. Only after two weeks--despite the ulema's express early permission to use firearms--could the authorities claim to have cleared the Mosque of insurgents.

* * * * *

Saudi Minister of Information Yamani was quick to assert that the Holy Mosque attack had no social or political roots in the country, and that there was no proof linking the Mecca rebels to any organizational extensions, domestic or foreign.²³ This and other sweeping reassurances by the royal family may have been more a brave facade than an honest depiction of the frightening truth. Robert Moss, a careful observer of Soviet activities in the Middle East, has reported that the Soviets were intimately involved in the insurgency:

Of the 500-odd men who joined the attack on the Grand Mosque, according to West European intelligence sources, 70 to 80 had been trained under Cuban and Soviet supervision at a camp at Lahej, 40 miles from Aden, which has also been used for instructing recruits of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. During the assault, in which Yemenis, Egyptians, Palestinians, and Kuwaitis took part, the South Yemeni army was mobilized along the Saudi border, together with its Soviet bloc advisers, apparently poised to intervene on the pretext of "defending the holy places," if the revolt showed signs of success. The rebels were equipped with a mixture of weapons--including old British rifles--to camouflage Soviet involvement, but large caches of modern Soviet-made arms were set up inside the South Yemeni border, ready for use if the moment presented itself. The whole exercise, which was supposed to include risings in Medina, Taif, and elsewhere, was supervised by a special Soviet command team.²⁴

As for "the movement" itself, while it may be more rhetoric than substance, ample reports and testimony suggest the opposite conclusion.²⁵ Even if one accepts Information Minister Yamani's seemingly overoptimistic assessment, however, there remain several disturbing aspects of this affair which should be noted for future reference.

a. Bedouin disloyalty-- The Oteiba and Kahtani tribes, from which many of the fundamentalist Wahhabi rebels came, have long been primary sources of loyal manpower to protect the royal family. Members of the king's personal Royal Guard, as well as the 35,000-man National Guard, have been recruited from these and other devoutly religious Bedouin tribes since the days of Ibn Saud's original "White Army." It is therefore interesting to see that several National Guardsmen took part in the Holy Mosque attack. The rebels' leader, Juhayman al-Oteibi, was himself a former lieutenant²⁶ who successfully persuaded other members to join him in plotting against the

ruling regime.

According to APPU leader al-Saeed, "It is known that these tribes had feuds with the Saud family and rebelled against it in the past, after some of them had stood on the side of the Saud family, and staged revolutions led by (the chief of the Mutray tribe and...the chief of the Oteiba tribe), both of whom were killed by the Saudi tyrants in the ugliest manner."²⁷ Without presuming to judge the veracity of al-Saeed's statement, it is fair to say that any bad blood between the royal family and these Bedouin tribes prior to the Mecca insurgency can only have been intensified by the authorities' overwhelming martial response to it.

In light of the National Guard defections, however insignificant in percentage terms, one would henceforth be well advised to view the frequently-heard truistic claims of absolute Bedouin loyalty to the king with a measure of wariness. Clearly, exceptions are possible.

b. religious unhappiness with the royal family-- Can the Saudi government achieve "modernization without Westernization," as it says, or will Riyadh's technocratic bent continue to disturb and alienate the country's most devout Muslims? We have already discussed the dynamics of change; what is most ominous about the Mecca uprising is the deadly combination of forsaken allegiance to the king with a (literally) "holier-than-thou" message. The twin pillars of the royal family's legitimacy--tribal loyalty to the king and custodianship of Islamic ideals--are directly challenged by this supremely

defiant act of protest. It may just be that the 1744 pact between Mohammed bin Saud and Imam Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab is beginning to unravel.

c. security apparatus shortcomings-- Although our analysis must rely on less-than-perfect information, we can point to certain procedures undertaken by the Saudi government before and after the siege which, if not upgraded, could cause problems in any future security crisis within the kingdom. First, there is the apparent failure of Saudi intelligence in the days and weeks preceding the attack to take note of the subversive activities of the rebels, especially the recruitment of army and National Guard personnel and the acquisition by deception and force of substantial quantities of government arms and vehicles. The attack itself and the trucks full of firearms to sustain it seem to have totally baffled the leaders in Riyadh--despite the eight-week-old partial alert status of the kingdom's troops.

Secondly, there is the evident lack of prior contingency planning to assist King Khalid in formulating a response to the insurgency. The delays in arriving at a decision, and the subsequent poor coordination between the army and the National Guard units which did respond²⁸ (enabling the insurgents to smuggle in fresh reinforcements and supplies), indicate operational weaknesses in the Saudi security apparatus.

These criticisms should trouble American defense planners as well. As the United States readies its 110,000-man "rapid deployment force" for possible rescue duty in the Saudi oilfields,

two key lessons from Mecca might profitably be taken into consideration:

** unreliability of information-- Within hours after the Holy Mosque was attacked, Saudi Arabia cut all communications with the outside world and maintained the blackout for at least 24 hours. The initial New York Times dispatch quoted "a senior American intelligence official" to the effect that his reports showed the insurgents to be Shi'ite Muslims from Iran.²⁹ This, of course, turned out to be untrue; but for 24 hours it may well have been the United States' operative assumption on the affair. If, in a situation of heightened U.S.-Soviet tension in the Gulf, Saudi saboteurs from "the movement" bearing Soviet weapons were to systematically incapacitate the eastern Al Hasa oilfields, one wonders how Washington would react if its best intelligence attributed the act to Baluchis, South Yemenis, or even Cubans. At worst, an internal Saudi crisis could be misread as--and hastily turned into--a superpower confrontation.

** dedication of insurgents-- In March 1975 a fanatically-religious young prince expressed his disaffection with the kingdom's drift away from Muslim values by stabbing his uncle King Faisal to death during a public session of the majlis; he was promptly beheaded. At Mecca in November 1979, the fanatics who stormed the Holy Mosque wore burial shrouds during the army's counterattack to show their total willingness to die for their cause;³⁰ in fact only 19 men and 23 women and children (out of perhaps 1000 total insurgents) escaped death by army gunfire or later beheading. If U.S. troops suffered a disadvantage in Vietnam due to the stronger ideological dedication among their Viet Cong adversaries, how would they fare against unshakeably-confident Wahhabi martyrs?

In sum, seeds of grassroots disaffection do exist in the kingdom, and the monarchy's ability to contain domestic unrest is demonstrably questionable. There is a final dimension to the internal security equation, namely the strains of disunity within the royal family itself.

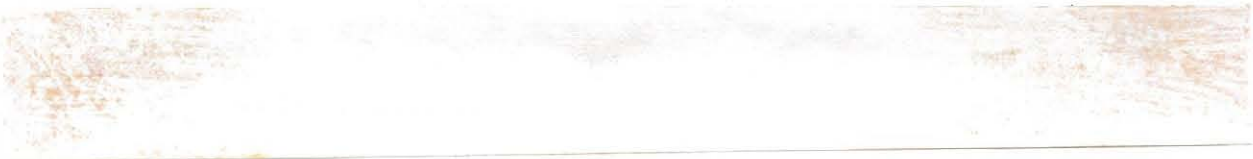
D. Rifts Within the Royal Family

"Let me explain something to you. If there is one thing this royal family is agreed on, it is its own survival. We do not survive by fighting each other."

--unnamed Saudi prince³¹

By most accounts, the confidence expressed by this prince is justified. A coup from within the House of Saud must be assigned a low probability measured against the other threats already discussed. But as the royal family controls the government and the nation's oil wealth, relations between and among its members have a magnified impact on the political climate throughout the kingdom, and thus an important bearing on the prospects for continued stability.

Not all of the roughly 4,000 princes and 4,000 princesses in the family are descendants of the Saud clan; there are three other blood lines as well--the Jaluwis, the Thunayans, and the Kabirs.³² Each clan is subdivided into various factions, each one formed around a common grandfather or great-grandfather. Still closer bonds unite sons of the same mother. Today, the most celebrated such family grouping is the "Sudairi Seven," so named for Hussa al-Sudairi. Her sons include Crown Prince Fahd, Minister of Defense Sultan, Minister of the Interior



Nayif, Deputy Minister of Defense Turki, Governor of Riyadh Salman, Deputy Minister of the Interior Ahmad and Counselor of Royal Family Affairs Abd al-Rahman.³³

The Sudairi Seven are the leading force for modernization in the kingdom; in this endeavor they are opposed by a conservative coalition led by the commander of the National Guard, Prince Abdullah, who ranks third in power after King Khalid and Crown Prince Fahd. Abdullah enjoys wide support among conservative Bedouin tribes as well as many leading ulema.

There are other such factions, and other issues which politically separate them. Yet the wealth, power and privilege enjoyed by royal family members--not to mention their mutual kinship--provide an overriding incentive for unity and a nonpareil guarantee of loyalty. From a security standpoint, the drawbacks in this system of government rule by an extended family are perhaps not as apparent as its advantages; nevertheless they should not be overlooked.

1. high cost of disunity-- Just as the Saudi royal family enjoys automatic popular acceptance of those policies which reflect a broad family consensus, so does it legitimize opposing viewpoints when the family is of two minds. By dissenting with the operative policy, the conservative princes who equate rapid modernization with undesirable Westernization are lending moral support to the fundamentalist tribesmen who share their concerns--including the extremists.

Says a recent study by the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, "...it is clear that there are

rivalries within the House of Saud, and there is evidence of differences of opinion and even antagonisms between some of the senior princes. These might in the future prove divisive, or even seriously destabilizing."³⁴ There is always the possibility, therefore, that secret cells of disaffected National Guardsmen will find sympathizers among their royal commanders, and the Sudairi Seven will be faced with an in-house "colonels' coup" aimed at returning the kingdom to fundamentalist purity.

2. incompetence-- By placing his closest relations in charge of the National Guard, General Intelligence, the Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and many other key security organizations, the king can count on strong loyalty in those posts. But the absence of a merit system--at all levels--seriously inhibits the upgrading of each branch's capabilities.

This point is especially relevant to the policy debate in Washington regarding sales of high technology armaments to the Saudis. According to a congressional analyst, "...the premise of the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces, particularly the air force, has been that they must achieve superior technology and a sophisticated air defense system to compensate for small numbers in manpower."³⁵

In order for the weapons systems to be credible as a deterrent, however, the "small numbers in manpower" must be fully capable of operating and maintaining them. But because the

Saudi culture rewards birthright, not achievement, there is a qualitative manpower deficiency as well. The most able young men are often drawn into the Saudi private sector, which offers matchless financial opportunities. "As a result," writes one observer, "all three arms of the services are understrength and are characterized by deficient leadership, lax discipline and poor motivation."³⁶ Ironically, this technology-oriented defense doctrine, in the absence of skilled indigenous manpower, only increases the country's dependence upon on-site foreign technical experts with their unwanted Western ways.

3. inexorable diffusion of central control-- With every day that the Saudis pump 9.5 million barrels of oil at \$30.00 per barrel, the kingdom receives \$285 million in revenues. This is equal to \$71.25 for each Saudi man, woman and child every day, or \$71,250.00 per prince. In fact, the funds are even more centrally controlled, as a New York Times correspondent explains:

The royal family receives yearly allotments of oil revenues determined by seniority and predominance in the hierarchy. Leading tribal figures get land and benefits. Senior officials who are not royalty are rewarded for services with land and cash, and so on."³⁷

As more and more huge new investment projects come into operation--two entire industrial port cities, the world's largest water desalinization facility, aluminum smelters, steel mills, twin coast-to-coast oil pipelines, new refineries, oil and LNG export terminals, petrochemical plants, airports,

a massive telecommunications system, military cities in the desert, and some of the West's finest conventional weapons systems--the senior princes must continually relinquish direct operative control over the kingdom's military-industrial complex. The result is what one analyst has termed "a developing trend from monarchical to ministerial rule."³⁸

Furthermore, the level of technical and financial expertise required to manage this burgeoning labyrinth can only come from advanced Western education. But of the 15,000 young Saudis currently studying abroad for graduate degrees,³⁹ most of those who return are likely to opt for the rich rewards of the private sector. The remainder cannot possibly satisfy the government's technocratic manpower requirements; foreign experts will have to be imported in ever-greater numbers. The same is true of unskilled manpower: in future years, the labor force will absorb proportionately more Yemenis than Saudis.

In short, the oil wealth is increasing much faster than the population. The king, the royal family and the entire country are becoming more prosperous, more advanced, and more powerful. The popular base of support for the monarchy is broadening as new benefits accrue to all Saudis. But in the sense of the ability to influence events, as the economic and bureaucratic power "pie" grows bigger, the king's share of it must shrink. He and the royal family are helpless to prevent the rise of a well-educated and bureaucratically powerful technocratic class, or to avoid the influx of more Western experts and many more immigrant workers. The private sector,

meanwhile, will generate new hordes of incomparably wealthy businessmen, some of whose materialistic excesses can only further alienate the religious fundamentalists.

* * * * *

Accelerating social change, the invasion of foreign influence, the rising value of the Saudi oil treasure--all of these strongly suggest that the kingdom's internal security concerns will become more challenging in future years. Whether money can buy stability remains to be seen; if so, the horn of plenty may one day be seen as a new third "pillar" legitimizing the monarchy's claim to rule.

The one virtual certainty, given OPEC's persistent price-hiking and Riyadh's plans to increase its daily oil output capacity, is that Saudi Arabia's "pie" will grow at an even faster rate in the coming years than it is growing today. One could scarcely fault a traditionalist Saudi Muslim for feeling that the 170-billion-barrel reservoir of oil sitting under Al Hasa's sands is more a curse than a blessing.

*Perhaps more in
the Army v. Air Force
sources of dissident
companies - in other
conservative Arab countries
(Egypt and Front; Libya-
Iraq) would have
helped.*

II. REGIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

Throughout the Middle East, there are people, interest groups and governments which harbor aggressive or subversive designs against the Saudi monarchy. Their motives vary widely. Some covet the oilfields or other strategic assets within the country's expansive territory. Others oppose the kingdom's hierarchical social order, especially the royal family's self-aggrandizement, and reject the moderate, pro-Western bent to which the Saudi monarchy has long been wedded.

The nature of the cumulative threat aimed at Riyadh by regional adversaries--present or potential--falls into two basic categories: external military attack or invasion; and low-level subversion through support or stimulation of the domestic pockets of opposition described in the preceding chapter. In this section we will look at the main security issues between Saudi Arabia and its neighbors.


A. The Sheikdoms

For several centuries, the only rulers in the Gulf states were monarchs (counting the Pahlavis in Iran). But recent years have brought great changes--the fall of Iraq's Hashemite monarchy in 1958, the defeat of the Yemeni royalists in the 1960s civil war, the formal departure of the British in 1971, the overthrow of the Shah in Iran in 1979--which have left the Gulf's remaining monarchs fearing for their continued sovereignty.⁴⁰

Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait are Saudi Arabia's closest "friends". Strung around Arabia's eastern shores, they share the Saudis' conservative Islamic heritage. More importantly, they face similar uncertainties: social pressures caused by rapid economic expansion, political ferment stirred by the region's radical forces, and security concerns stemming from the vulnerability of strategically-vital territories.

In many ways, the erosion of traditional stability is further advanced in the sheikhdoms than in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, these peripheral neighbors lack Saudi Arabia's widely dispersed military installations, royal-family-dominated cities, and (relatively) large population zones which limit the Saudi regime's susceptibility to decapitation through any single, localized coup attempt. In the past decade, the Gulf's monarchs, recognizing their shared status as an endangered political species, have turned to each other, and particularly to Riyadh, for advice and assistance.

The Saudis have gradually assumed a major role in the funding and coordination of all of the intelligence activities in the sheikhdoms, and the Gulf's foreign ministers now convene on a regular basis. Newsweek has reported that at one such meeting in July 1979, held on a Saudi military base and attended by "rulers and senior ministers" from Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, the participants "agreed...that the U.S. cannot be counted on to defend the established anti-Marxist order in the oil-producing states of the Arabian Penin-



sula, or to keep a ruling house in power."⁴¹ A review of each country's security concerns will show why the Saudi leadership is as sensitive to the problems of its neighbors as to its own.

1. Oman

Oman faces an array of external threats. Separated from the main body of Omani territory by a section of the United Arab Emirates is the tip of the Musandam Peninsula, which juts into the Gulf at its narrowest point. The twenty-eight-mile wide Strait of Hormuz, which Arnaud de Borchgrave has termed "the world's most vital waterway," connects the region's oil producers with the outside world's consumers. To guard this very sensitive choke point against terrorism, along with 1,000 miles of coastline, Oman has only seven patrol boats; it has no minesweeping capability.⁴²

On the opposite side of the sultanate, Oman borders the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). Among other destabilizing activities (see PDRY section, below), the PDRY has long aided secessionist rebels in the rural southwestern Dhofar province of Oman. Beginning in 1963, the Dhofar Liberation Front, a communist movement aided variously by (then) South Yemen, Iraq, Libya, China, the U.S.S.R. and most of Eastern Europe, fought the Omani army, which enjoyed first British assistance and later Jordanian and Iranian support. Although the insurgents were captured or driven out by December 1975, a group called the Popular Front for the Liberation

of Oman (PFLO) has continued to mobilize opposition forces, presumably for a future campaign. The mounting Soviet threat to Oman, both in the PDRY and across the Gulf in Afghanistan, only heightens Oman's two-front apprehensions.

Sultan Qabus bin Said, who gained power in 1970 by ousting his father Sultan Taimur with British help, is ill-equipped to secure a stable future in the face of these pressures. With the departure of the Shah from Iran, Qabus lost a key ally. The only other regional military power with any potential sympathy for Qabus is Egypt; and indeed, a future large deployment of Egyptian forces in Oman would not be altogether surprising, given the substantial presence of Egyptian professionals and teachers in Oman today, and the existence of a small Egyptian proxy military contingent, funded by Qabus.

For now, however, Qabus must rely for military security mainly on a residual British contingent of 600 officers--some official, others under personal contract⁴³--to train and assist his own tough but inadequate 12,000-man army.⁴⁴ The Saudis have in recent years provided Oman with over \$3 billion⁴⁵ in military and economic aid, including 1979 grants of \$100 million for U.S. arms and \$500 million for construction of a highway to connect Muscat (the capital) with the Dhofar province's main city of Salalah.

Sultan Qabus is already regionally unpopular for having lent the only Arab support (other than the Sudan) to Israel's treaty with Egypt. Against the strong anti-superpower policy

preferences of most Gulf states, he now has perpetuated and even expanded the West's military presence in his country. In January 1980, British Prime Minister Thatcher announced an indefinite suspension of the previously-arranged 1982-1983 deadline for withdrawal of British troops.⁴⁶ In June 1980 the United States revealed a limited "basing-for-aid" pact with Oman;⁴⁷ this should facilitate the maintenance of a substantial U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, including troops, pre-positioned combat supplies and air power--all deemed necessary by the Carter administration after the Soviet advance into Afghanistan.

But time may be running out on Sultan Qabus and all of those who count on him to keep the Strait of Hormuz from falling prey to malevolent forces. Oman's economy, which depends on oil revenues for 99 percent of its export earnings, is contracting as the country's oil output declines. In 1985 the oil will run out, and Saudi-financed infant industries will have to support the economy. Politically, the Sultan's legitimacy rests on questionable foundations. Having gained power through force, Qabus offers no heir to succeed him. The country has no democratic institutions. Furthermore, the Omani population of under one million is mixed with a Palestinian population of nearly comparable size (such that the U.S. State Department has placed Oman on its "precautionary list" of countries harboring major Palestinian populations⁴⁸). All of these factors will affect the future of Oman; and understandably,


the Saudis are troubled by their neighbor's weakness and vulnerability.

2. United Arab Emirates

The federation of Trucial States known as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) gained independence when the British departed in 1971. (Due to enduring rivalries, Ras al-Khaimah chose not to join.) Despite its name, the UAE is plagued by disunity over the extent to which federation should govern the various emirates' political and economic affairs.⁴⁹ Five of the emirates are poor; the other two, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, enjoy huge oil incomes--and disagree fundamentally over the country's proper political course.

The President of the UAE is Sheikh Zayed, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, which presently receives 80 percent of the federation's oil revenues.⁵⁰ Zayed favors a federal pooling of income, coordination of defense forces, and substantial powers for the National Assembly. In such an arrangement, Abu Dhabi would be the undisputed center of the UAE's power. For this reason, Zayed's federal plan is strongly opposed by the ruler of the major port of Dubai, Sheikh Rashid, who was made Prime Minister of the UAE in April 1979. Dubai's small population presently enjoys a level of affluence and privilege which would disappear if the five poor emirates were to gain an equal claim to the oil income.

The importance of this rivalry to the Gulf is both political and military. Oman supports Sheikh Rashid's anti-federalism, in part because a more unified and strengthened UAE would



diminish Oman's prospects of reclaiming the disputed Buraimi oasis, which straddles the UAE-Oman border.⁵¹ The Saudi rulers, however, fully support the Abu Dhabi federalists, in return for which Sheikh Sayed sides with Saudi Arabia's oil price moderation within OPEC, and gives the Saudis access to the Gulf between the UAE and Qatar.

There are several factors underlying King Khalid's desire to see the UAE militarily strengthened. The country's population of 850,000⁵² is only 25 percent indigenous,⁵³ the other 75 percent being mostly Indian, Pakistani and Palestinian. As the army must rely largely on Omani, Baluchi and Yemeni troops led by British, Jordanian and Pakistani officers, the questionable cohesion and loyalty are matters for some concern.

The Dubai-Abu Dhabi rivalry is a second source of uncertainty in the military sector. Whereas Dubai purchases its arms from Great Britain, Abu Dhabi deals primarily with France. When Sheikh Rashid provided safe haven in Dubai in 1979 for many Iranian army elements during and after the fall of his good friend the Shah, Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi named his own son commander-in-chief of the UAE's Union Defense Force (UDF).

The growing perception of a Soviet menace to the Gulf has given the emirates fresh impetus to set aside their differences. Kuwait has served as a mediator, and Saudi Arabia has provided leadership in stressing the overriding commonality of interests throughout the Gulf. But Ayatollah Khomeini and radical Palestinian groups continue to stimulate discord among

the foreign majority in the UAE. As the Middle East Newsletter has concluded, "...the UAE federation represents one of the conservative Arab Gulf's weakest links."⁵⁴

3. Qatar

With a native population of approximately 50,000 settled amongst 150,000 Palestinians, Egyptians, Yemenis, Iranians, Indians and Pakistanis,⁵⁵ Qatar is a tiny country which pumps almost one-half million barrels of oil a day.⁵⁶ To patrol its Gulf waters, Qatar has only 36 patrol craft and 11 helicopters; to defend itself, it has an army of 4,000 (including the national guard) and an air force with but 4 combat aircraft.⁵⁷ Perhaps more than any other sheikhdom, Qatar depends almost entirely upon the Saudis to ensure its defense. In return, the ruling Al Thani clan in Doha faithfully supports Saudi oil policies within OPEC and cooperates fully with Riyadh's efforts to coordinate Gulf security operations.

4. Bahrain

If the simmering contention in Saudi Arabia between strict Muslim traditionalists and pro-Western modernizers ever results in the demise of the al-Saud monarchy, Bahrain will surely have played a leading role.

Politically, this archipelago country resembles Saudi Arabia in that the conservative Sunni Muslim al-Khalifa family has ruled almost exclusively for 198 years. Economically, the two countries are closely linked through several industrial ventures; the most important is Bahrain's major oil refinery,

80 percent of whose capacity handles Saudi light crude. But culturally, Bahrain is everything that Saudi Arabia cannot allow itself to become, and herein lies the problem.

Alcohol, cinemas, uncensored magazines and discothèques are all to be found in Bahrain, making it the Gulf's "watering hole" for Westerners and non-traditional Arabs. Women enjoy an emancipated status unknown to the neighboring conservative Muslim states: wearing the veil is not required; women can drive automobiles; they have free choice of spouse; institutional segregation from men is increasingly rare; and working in public is not banned or even discouraged.⁵⁸

Added to this liberated environment is a thriving 21st-century economy. Banking is Bahrain's specialty; no less than 48 foreign banks operate in Manama's short-term private money market, which is tax-free and imposes no reserve requirements. Aluminum smelting and dry dock tanker repair provide a model diversity of income sources to which all oil-exporting countries facing declining output should aspire. Bahrain is the transportation and communications center of the Gulf, featuring Gulf Air (which accommodates the Concorde) and an earth-satellite station for instantaneous worldwide telex and direct-dial telephone service.

Obviously, Bahrain provides several indispensable conveniences to the Saudi business community and the kingdom in general. But equally apparent should be the social dangers posed by this island of many temptations. Perhaps one could

argue that Bahrain performs a helpful service for Saudi Arabia by drawing away many Saudis who would otherwise offend Islamic traditions within the kingdom's borders. But more probably, this glittering example of a conservative Sunni sheikhdom-turned-futuristic Westernized boomtown only seduces progressive Saudis into a more lenient attitude toward materialism and sexual freedom.

As new generations of Western-educated Saudis come to accept and appreciate the lifestyle Bahrain offers for young Muslims in professional lines of work, it will be increasingly difficult to turn back the clock "on the mainland." Saudi Arabia's fundamentalist Wahhabi tribesmen, such as those who invaded the Grand Mosque at Mecca, and the ultra-conservatives among the ulema and the royal family, are certain to step up their opposition to Crown Prince Fahd and his fellow modernizers.

Contacts between Bahrain and eastern Saudi Arabia are extensive; each's television broadcasts can be seen by the other; 12 flights and 6 boat runs are available every day; and a \$1 billion 14-mile road will open in 1985 to connect the two countries.⁵⁹ Thus any hopes of isolating the Saudi kingdom from Bahrain's cultural influence are unrealistic. This fact becomes doubly significant when Bahrain's political problems--to which the Saudis are no less exposed--are taken into account.

There are three broad segments of Bahraini society whose differences with the regime of Sheikh Isa bin Sulman al-Khalifa

pose a potential threat to his rule. First, there are those who seek democratic institutions to augment or even replace the Emir's autocracy. Despite full access to foreign printed and broadcast media, one of the Gulf's highest literacy rates, and a U.S.-designed merit system within the government bureaucracy, Bahrain's government has not politically evolved along with its citizens.

Political parties and labor unions are forbidden, and the press is "self-censored." As a New York Times correspondent reported in 1979, "...the ruling family has been unable to establish any workable form of popular participation in Government beyond the Emir's majlis."⁶⁰ A National Assembly, introduced to accommodate the politically active among Bahrain's citizenry, was dissolved in 1975, reportedly under pressure from Riyadh,⁶¹ after it opposed an "internment without trial" law. Under such circumstances, democratic stirrings could reappear at any time.

A second interest group worth noting is the mass of 75,000 foreign workers whose ranks continue to swell with the expanding economy. As in the other manpower-deficient sheikhdoms of the Gulf, Bahrain faces the risks accompanying the importation of immigrant labor--hostile political ideologies, resentment of inferior social status, and even economic grievances made worse by the country's inflation. At present, however, there does not appear to be any significant worker unrest.

The third group to consider is Bahrain's Shi'ite population

which, although ruled by Sunnis, constitutes a two-thirds majority of the country's 355,000 inhabitants. As in Saudi Arabia's eastern province, the Shi'ites of Bahrain have responded to the Ayatollah Khomeini's broadcast diatribes against the Sunni royal clans of al-Saud and al-Khalifa. Shi'ite demonstrations occurred in the summer of 1979 on the island;⁶² an escalation of Sunni-Shi'ite antagonism throughout the Gulf could prove especially troublesome for Bahrain.

Through the human "osmosis" created by the physical proximity and extensive interaction of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, all three of these groups--even if Bahrain succeeds in adapting smoothly to their respective needs--pose problems for Saudi Arabia, whose margin of political and cultural flexibility is by comparison very limited.

5. Kuwait

More than any other sheikhdom, Kuwait has experimented with democratic government. The ruling al-Sabah family secured independence from the British in 1961 and inaugurated the Gulf's first constitutional monarchy in 1962. Since then, the Kuwaitis have freely elected four National Assemblies. The fourth Assembly was suspended, however, in August 1976 by the late Sheikh Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah because it had become "unruly".⁶³ The Assembly had actively concerned itself with foreign affairs, most notably the Lebanese civil strife; when its mediation effort failed, the Assembly was dissolved. Four years later, pressures from Kuwait's rising

middle class and the growing stratum of young university graduates have persuaded Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah to allow new parliamentary elections by the end of 1980.

The notion that rule by Islamic monarchy is becoming obsolete is shared by a growing number of intellectuals in Kuwait. Speaking of all the Gulf sheikhdoms, a former chairman of Kuwait University's political science department (who lost his job after airing his views) has said:

The regimes in power might have succeeded in the past to stay on top of the political pyramid because ruling was tribal and simple....But today,...they can't run the state in the same way you run a tribe. There must be change.⁶⁴

The majlis has been criticized as an inadequate and inequitable forum for accommodating people's grievances; issues such as human rights, popular participation in government, and the distribution of oil wealth have all surfaced in print.

Some observers believe that Kuwait may soon become a champion of democracy in the Gulf.⁶⁵ But as with cultural freedom in Bahrain, political freedom in Kuwait spells trouble for Saudi Arabia, where systemic change is the enemy of stability. A democratic government in Kuwait, even if fully sympathetic toward the al-Saud leaders in Riyadh, would by its very existence suggest a viable alternative to monarchical rule in the Gulf. If, on the other hand, Kuwait were to elect leaders hostile to the Saudi royal family, then the latter's problems would be multiplied. Three sectors of the Kuwaiti population provide grounds for this caveat.

First, there is a small but outspoken community of radicals in Kuwait known as "Arab Nationalists" or "Khatibis," whose primary goal is to unseat the Emir and his royal family. Additionally, the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG) has been active in Kuwait for the past decade or so. Among the intelligentsia, various leftists have gained prominence with their critiques of the monarchy. A democratic system would offer all of these dissidents greater freedom of expression.

Secondly, there is a substantial population of foreign laborers. More than half of Kuwait's resident workers are foreign; of these, the 300,000 Palestinians have been likened to an "ethnic time bomb,"⁶⁶

Finally, there is a restive Shi'ite minority, estimated at 17 percent of the population.⁶⁷ The demands for religious fundamentalism by the Ayatollah Khomeini generated such unrest in Kuwait in late 1979 that the government banned all public meetings of more than 20 people.⁶⁸ Martial measures, it will be recalled, failed to discourage or contain the Shi'ite revolution in Iran.

* * * * *

For all their similarities, the Gulf sheikhdoms differ in the primary threat posed by each to Saudi security. Oman's vital shipping lane is strategically vulnerable; the tiny indigenous cultures of the UAE and Qatar are rapidly being overwhelmed by the bittersweet fruits of their oil wealth;

Bahrain is socially permissive; and Kuwait's commoners are trying to strip the royal family of its authority.

Yet the fate of these Sunni monarchies is indivisible. The future stability of Saudi Arabia will therefore depend in large part on the ability of the Saudi leadership to manage the pace of change throughout the Gulf through security assistance and policy coordination, and on the willingness of the kingdom's conservatives to accept a modicum of social and political liberalization, since change is in any case inevitable.

B. Iran

The Shi'ite Islamic revolution in Iran, culminating in the Shah's January 1979 exile, was viewed with great apprehension in Riyadh. In geopolitical terms, the rapid transformation of Iran--from a strong pro-Western buffer between the Saudi kingdom and the "godless" communist Soviets into a fragmented and volatile sworn enemy of King Khalid--has altered the regional balance of power.

Whereas the United States, in keeping with the Nixon Doctrine, had previously supported Iran's self-appointed role as regional "policeman", the Islamic revolution in Iran left Saudi Arabia in a far less secure position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R.'s advance southward into Afghanistan merely confirmed existing Saudi perceptions (shared by all Gulf leaders) that America's deterrent power in the Gulf had been on the wane for some years.

Logistically, the Saudi oilfields are least defensible against an attack from the east. If pro-Moscow leftists should come to power in Teheran, or if the Soviet Red Army were ever to move any further toward the Gulf, perhaps through Baluchistan, the Gulf's oilfields and shipping lanes would require a substantially greater defense effort on the part of Saudi Arabia just to maintain a credible deterrent. On the Saudis' southern flank, Soviet-backed PDRY insurgents can now plan a new offensive in Oman's Dhofar province without fear of being outgunned again by Iranian troops. In sum, the Shah's exit created major new security headaches for the Saudis.

The rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini has strengthened the hand of forces for change throughout the Gulf, much to the distress of the al-Saud clan and its royal neighbors. The very concept of Islam as a revolutionary force--for that matter, as an anti-monarchical force--is anathematical to the royal Sunni dynasties.⁶⁹ In addition to his call for Shi'ites everywhere to rise against their "corrupt" Sunni masters, Khomeini has been pressing certain territorial claims in the Gulf.

Three islands in the Strait of Hormuz--Greater and Lesser Tunbs, claimed by the emirate of Ras al-Khaimah, and Abu Musa, claimed by the emirate of Sharjah--were occupied by the Shah's troops on November 30, 1971. (Under an agreement dated the previous day, Sharjah had agreed to the Abu Musa takeover by

Iran, but Arab states nevertheless condemned the entire action.) In 1979 Khomeini claimed full Iranian sovereignty over all three of these islands, which lie amidst the Arab oil shipping lanes. Iraq, which severed diplomatic ties with Teheran after the 1971 move, has now taken up the gauntlet for the Arab cause, pressing for the return of the islands as one of its demands during the 1980 conflict with Iran.

Another contentious dispute involves the predominantly Shi'ite sheikhdom of Bahrain, long occupied by the Persians, which was claimed in 1968 and then formally disclaimed in 1970 by the Shah. Khomeini revived these claims in the spring of 1979, and conducted such a venomous campaign to incite Bahrain's Shi'ites to revolt that in late 1979 the Saudis, Iraq, Kuwait and Egypt pledged military assistance to Bahrain in the event that Iran's provocations became too destabilizing.⁷⁰

The threat from Khomeini's Iran is more social and religious than overtly military in nature. The revolutionary Islamic government has refused Soviet offers of arms⁷¹ (extended before the escalation of hostilities with Iraq in mid-1980), and does not appear to be yielding much political ground to the communist Tudeh party or the Marxist-Leninist Fedayeen guerrillas.⁷² Should the Islamic regime collapse and disintegrate, however, there could be far more exploitable opportunities for Soviet penetration of economic and political life in Iran.

For the time being, Riyadh has little choice but to sit back and watch the turn of events across the Gulf. Not until

Iran, under the present regime or a successor one, completes the reconstitution of its political institutions and begins to revitalize its crumbling economy will the Saudis (and the rest of the world) be relieved of the constant uncertainty which surrounds the country's revolutionary aftermath.

C. PDRY and YAR

On their southwestern flank, the Saudis face a serious and growing military threat. Through adept diplomacy and aid apportionment, Riyadh is seeking to avert the unification of North and South Yemen, which could give rise to a formidable military establishment under direct Soviet control. While some recent developments have appeared to enhance Saudi security objectives, the longer-term trends are anything but reassuring.

The port of Aden, as well as the South Yemeni territory which long bore its name, was a part of British India until 1937, when it became a crown colony. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) won its independence from Great Britain in 1967, largely through the efforts of a leftist movement called the National Liberation Front.

In addition to its Arabian mainland territory, the PDRY includes the 1,400-square-mile island of Socotra 600 miles to the southeast, the island of Perim in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, and the island of Kamaran along the upper North Yemeni coast. All of these afford the PDRY excellent strategic access

to the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, along with the potential ability to control ship passage through the Bab el-Mandeb strait, which connects Europe's Mediterranean traffic with the Horn of Africa, the Gulf, south Asia and beyond.

In recent years, the PDRY has developed into a client state serving Soviet interests in the region. In so doing, it has become a base for training and weaponry at every level of offensive capability, from covert terrorism to nuclear strikes. By any interpretation, the political ends to which these forces are directed spell danger to the royal family in Saudi Arabia.

Starting at the lowest level, the PDRY backs a number of radical organizations. International terrorist groups are reportedly training new recruits in camps at Hauf, Mukalla and Al Gheida.⁷³ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Dr. George Habash's Marxist-Leninist faction of the PLO, also receives substantial assistance from the PDRY, as do the Fedayeen in Iran.

The PDRY actively supports the aforementioned PFLOAG (the reconstituted PFLO insurgent group which was driven out of Oman's Dhofar province in 1975). With offices now in Aden, Tripoli, Baghdad, Algiers, Damascus and Beirut, the PFLOAG seems certain to rekindle the Dhofar struggle when the moment seems propitious.

Under Soviet auspices, the PDRY is hosting a complex network of foreign-trained internal and external security forces.⁷⁴

Estimates of the total number of foreign communist advisors run as high as 15,000, over half of them Soviets.⁷⁵ Approximately 400 East German advisors run three sensitive bureaus: the political police force, which tracks and intercepts domestic enemies of the government; the immigration section, which endeavors to dissuade South Yemenis from flocking to the Gulf's ever-expanding job markets; and the Secret Service, which conducts clandestine intelligence operations in the YAR and Saudi Arabia.

An estimated 4,000 uniformed Cuban military personnel train the PDRY's Popular Militia; this "public security force" probably numbers 15,000 men⁷⁶ (although some estimates run more than three times higher). The 25,000-man army, a small but very effective force, is trained by Soviet military advisors and supplied with advanced Soviet weapons.

On October 25, 1979, the PDRY signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship with the U.S.S.R., binding both countries to "continue to develop cooperation in the military field in the interests of strengthening their defense capacity." This pact is not unlike those between Moscow and Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Iraq, Ethiopia and Vietnam;⁷⁷ if anything, it is more extensive.

Under an accompanying protocol on technical and economic cooperation, the Soviet Union pledged to the PDRY \$750 million in annual aid plus a guaranteed supply of oil. The U.S.S.R. has also initiated a program to double the South Yemeni army

in three years. Following the signing of the treaty, a number of senior PDRY officers were reassigned to the Warsaw Pact command in Budapest--and the PDRY forces and facilities became accessible to the Pact for emergency situations.

The South Yemeni island of Socotra houses a Soviet base at its northern tip; the surrounding area has recently become an exclusively Soviet-run military zone. Squadrons of Mig-25, Mig-23 and Mig-21 planes, plus Mi-25 helicopter gunships, rest on airfields flanked by SAM installations. Along Socotra's deep-water coast, Soviet minesweepers and spyships have in 1980 been joined by bigger vessels. Submarine pens have been under construction, and missile-carrying nuclear submarines have reportedly been in evidence since mid-1979.⁷⁸ In addition, Socotra is said to have become the headquarters for a regional combined operations command consisting of the army chiefs of staff for Ethiopia and the PDRY, Cuba's area commander, and a Soviet supreme commander.

After the U.S.S.R. overran Afghanistan in December 1979, Soviet military activities in the PDRY were accelerated. The port at Aden was expanded to accommodate a permanent Soviet fleet of 25-30 surface ships plus a number of submarines; bunkering facilities were constructed on Perim Island in the Bab el-Mandeb strait; numbers of the Soviets' best tank, the T-72, were seen in the PDRY for the first time; and Soviet personnel levels reportedly rose as well.⁷⁹

The Saudis have good reason to fear this rapid military buildup. Riyadh has never recognized the PDRY revolutionary

regime, and in fact has clashed with it repeatedly: first in the early 1960s, when the pre-independence South Yemeni revolutionary regime bombed Saudi villages;⁸⁰ in November 1969, when the Saudis withstood a local border incursion; in March 1973, when troops again skirmished along the border; and in 1974 and 1976, when lesser hostilities flared.

Saudi economic aid policies have also contributed to the adversarial attitude in Aden. Riyadh's aid to conservative elements in North Yemen is described below. It was a \$300 million Saudi grant to Somalia's President Siad Barre which convinced him to withdraw Soviet naval and air basing privileges at Berbera in November 1977;⁸¹ ironically for Riyadh, this only increased the Soviets' reliance on Aden, and led to a far more potent (and hostile) military presence there.

Conciliatory Saudi offers of economic aid to South Yemen-- a very poor country--have been coldly refused. But notwithstanding these direct bilateral frictions between Saudi Arabia and the PDRY, the primary arena of their conflict has been, and continues to be, North Yemen.

The history of Saudi Arabia's relations with North Yemen has been a checkered one. In 1934 King Ibn Saud waged war with his southern neighbors and seized the coastal Asir province from Yemen; the resulting boundary arrangement left the North Yemenis perpetually embittered.

The Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) was formed in 1962 when the

feudal monarchy was overthrown by a radical opposition. Saudi Arabia stood by the ousted royalists in the seven-year civil war which ensued, but the republicans prevailed with the aid of 50,000 Egyptian troops using mostly Soviet arms. Since 1974 the YAR has been governed by more moderate leaders professing strict nonalignment. But nonalignment for North Yemen exists only insofar as the "tug-of-war" between Saudi Arabia and the PDRY remains stalemated.

At issue is the question of whether the YAR should unify with the PDRY. Within the YAR are factions on both sides of the unification issue, as well as other elements playing both sides against each other for money, arms and power. The conservative Hashid tribes in the rural northeast are Riyadh's most important clients in the YAR; yet these influential and militarily powerful Yemenis, despite huge subsidies paid to them by Saudi Arabia, have shown questionable loyalty to their Saudi benefactors in recent border clashes.⁸² Furthermore, as the Hashidi are Shi'ites, the Iranian revolution has aroused and alienated them somewhat from their former solidarity with the conservative Sunnis in Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, the Hashidi have consistently resisted unification, often with turbulent consequences. In October 1977 YAR President Ibrahim al-Hamdi, a proponent of unity talks, was assassinated by Yemeni tribesmen, possibly aided by Saudi agents.⁸³ His pro-Riyadh successor, President Ghashemi, was killed eight months later by a bomb carried by a personal

envoy of PDRY President Robaya.

Financial and political concerns motivate other opponents of unification in North Yemen. The country now holds roughly 350,000 merchants driven out of Aden by the PDRY's Marxist-Leninist regime. The YAR government itself includes many top officials who would prefer to maintain the country's dependence on Saudi budget subsidies of \$700 million per year and on the large remittances from one million North Yemenis working in the Gulf. Unification would cause costly disruption throughout the YAR's already-weak economy.

The main push for unification in the YAR comes from the National Democratic Front, a PDRY-supported leftist opposition party. This group's influence was demonstrated in the United Nations when the YAR abstained on the Muslim-backed resolution condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh has juggled both sides along with their superpower guardians, thereby giving an interesting interpretation to "nonalignment". Upon assuming office in June 1978, Saleh approved a small permanent U.S. military training mission, including a number of Taiwanese technicians, and a long-term U.S. weapons program for North Yemen. Alongside this pro-Western presence he then welcomed even greater numbers of Soviet and East German advisors, and permitted YAR officers to train in the U.S.S.R.⁸⁴

When PDRY forces--reportedly bolstered by Cuban troops⁸⁵--invaded the YAR in March 1979, following a month of border

flare-ups, Saleh took hasty delivery of \$400 million (Saudi-financed) in American weapons: 64 M-60 tanks, 100 armored personnel carriers, 12 F-5E fighter planes, and Vulcan anti-aircraft guns. Saleh promptly turned around and arranged the acquisition (this time Iraqi-financed) of much greater quantities of Soviet arms: over 600 tanks (mostly T-62s, with 200 Polish T-55s included), 36 Mig-21s, 24 Sukhoi jets, and Frog surface-to-surface missiles.

Saudi Arabia (and by extension, the United States) suffers in North Yemen from the common perception that it seeks to dominate the YAR.⁸⁶ Careless violations of the YAR border in February 1980 by smuggler-hunting Saudi land and air patrols, forays in which several North Yemeni soldiers and civilians were reportedly killed by mistake, can only have heightened the YAR's antipathy toward its overbearing northern neighbor. Years of political discrimination and social ostracism by Saudis against the Yemeni immigrants who do their dirty work in the kingdom have likewise soured relations between the two countries.

But President Saleh appears to have concluded, for now at least, that the Soviet-dominated PDRY represents the stronger political threat (or the weaker economic patron): in March 1980, an accord was reached between Saudi Arabia and the YAR under which the Soviet advisory presence is to be phased out and PDRY unification talks are to end.⁸⁷

A second salutary development for Riyadh occurred in Aden

on April 21, 1980, when Ali Nasser Mohammed replaced Abdel Fattah Ismail as the PDRY head of state and chief of the ruling Yemen Socialist Party. Mohammed is believed to favor more cooperative relations with both Saudi Arabia and the YAR, with a greater emphasis on securing economic aid and a toned-down ideological profile.⁸⁸ His June 29 visit to Riyadh set Saudi-PDRY relations on an unmistakably friendlier course.⁸⁹

Despite these positive trends, the Saudis continue to fear that the non-Islamic Marxists in the PDRY, along with all of the Soviet, Cuban, East German and Ethiopian arms and men in Africa and Arabia could one day avail themselves of the YAR's generous manpower supply (its native population of 7 million exceeds that of Saudi Arabia) and strategic territories to wage war on the oil-rich royalists to the north. Saudi defense planning must provide for this drastic but by no means unthinkable scenario.

D. Israel

Although an Aden-based communist invasion reinforced from the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe would be an unparalleled nightmare for Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's defensive preoccupation has not been with the U.S.S.R. or the Yemens, but with Israel.

Thirty-two years and four wars after declaring its independence, Israel still sits with its back to the sea, prac-

tically surrounded by Arab adversaries, and defying almost the entire world to stop it from consolidating its hold on territories occupied since 1967. Israel's March 1979 peace treaty with Egypt has greatly reduced any reasonable fear of attack from the southwest; but the Camp David peace framework (not to mention its three "framers") may be declining in political leverage over the parties to the Palestinian "question". Present trends point not toward new compromises, but rather toward the likelihood of a fifth Arab-Israeli war.

Saudi Arabia's political fortunes are closely linked to this situation. The royal family must somehow see its way through a very precarious security equation: failure to oppose Israel's policies would cost King Khalid his leadership of the Islamic world and his high standing in the Arab world-- in other words, his regional influence; yet oil-powered support for a Palestinian state,⁹⁰ for all the regional honor and friendship it currently buys Riyadh, only nudges Israel ever closer to the brink of war--a war in which the Saudis will have no choice but to participate, and no chance but to lose men, weapons, territories, oilfields, and perhaps more. To understand how Saudi Arabia's leaders interpret the many facets of this, the core issue of Middle East politics, we must look closely at a number of factors in Israel.

but why not the "core issue"?

1. Jerusalem

Jerusalem, after Mecca and Medina, is the third holiest city of Islam. Israeli paratroopers captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 War, and Israel has held it ever



since. The Saudis, as the self-appointed guardians of the Islamic heritage, are irrevocably committed to seeking the return of East Jerusalem to the Muslim world. Any compromise on this issue would be viewed by all Muslims as no less than a repudiation of Allah's word; flexibility on the status of Jerusalem is therefore out of the question for King Khalid.

Does it this depend on how you define flexibility?

Israel has staked out an equally unbending position, claiming that East Jerusalem rightfully belongs to Israel instead of Jordan; and it has taken several steps to secure a permanent hold on the city. Every key Israeli ministry except Defense is now in Jerusalem. New roads and buildings are being planned for construction alongside the Old City walls.⁹¹ Large housing projects and a new National Police headquarters have been opened in the city's Arab quarter. Israel has urged its diplomatic friends to move their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (although the only recent relocations have been in the other direction).⁹² Without a doubt, however, the single most provocative act has been the constitutional amendment, overwhelmingly passed on July 30, 1980 by the Israeli Knesset, to locate the entire government in East Jerusalem and to thenceforth legally consider the city "the undivided capital of Israel."⁹³

Even Israel's Camp David partners, Egypt and the United States, have never recognized Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, and in fact President Sadat had suspended the

Palestinian autonomy talks in April 1980 when the Knesset first took up the proposal. For its part, Israel has never officially acknowledged the sanctity of the city to non-Jews. Prospects for a mediated compromise are not rated very promising. Reports Christopher S. Wren of the New York Times, "Neither Israelis nor Arabs want it internationalized, for it would mean bringing in a bureaucracy of outsiders."⁹⁴

In sum, the Jerusalem issue alone could cause a war, even if (by some unlikely turn of events) Israel were to accede to all the other Arab demands by vacating the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip, and especially if a sovereign Palestinian state were to be created, since this would sooner or later become a Muslim base from which to retake the holy city.

2. Isolation and Hard-Line Policy

With each former friend which deserts Israel in the diplomatic arena, the Israeli government defiantly undertakes new, even more obstinate policy initiatives; and vice versa. The latest episode in this cycle of extremism and isolation is the above-mentioned Israeli decision to make Jerusalem its undivided capital. This action came but one day after six members of the European Economic Community displayed a new-found neutrality vis-à-vis their formerly close friend Israel by abstaining on a UN General Assembly resolution which supports the formation of a Palestinian state and calls upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, including

Jerusalem.

The final UN vote was 112 for, and only 7 against, indicating that the tide of world opinion--at least at the level of official statecraft--seems to be running against Israel. Even Secretary General Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations took issue with Israel on June 25, 1980, remarking that "...foreign forces have to be withdrawn from the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem," and that the Palestinians "...have a right to self-determination, including statehood."⁹⁵

While Israel's provocative conduct can be credited with alienating many erstwhile supporters, an equally major factor is the so-called Arab "oil weapon," which has arguably served to pry European support away from the Camp David framework, and in some cases--notably pre-coup Turkey⁹⁶--influenced the domestic political arena as well. Saudi Arabia and Iraq escalated the OAPEC oil-for-support campaign with their August 7, 1980 joint announcement that they would cut political and economic ties with any and all countries accepting Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, including countries which merely retained embassies already in Jerusalem.⁹⁷

In the face of mounting opposition, Israel has hardened its stance on a range of issues. There is talk now of formally annexing the occupied Golan Heights,⁹⁸ and of constructing a canal across the occupied Gaza Strip.⁹⁹ As if to give

more "de facto" substance to their apparent long-term goal of "de jure" annexations, the Israelis are settling the occupied territories, in violation of the Camp David accords (by the U.S. official interpretation). Led by a group of Zionist volunteers called Gush Emunim ("the Bloc of the Faithful"), 14,000 Israelis have filled 62 settlements all across the West Bank since 1977 with the Knesset's blessing; 10 more settlements are currently planned, although the World Zionist Organization is said to favor 85 new West Bank sites by 1985.¹⁰⁰ In the Golan Heights, there are now 6,000 Israelis in 27 settlements.

The majority of these settlers are enduring risk and forgoing comfort in order to give essence to the early Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky's vision of a Jewish state throughout Palestine. Geula Cohen, the Knesset legislator who sponsored the bill affirming Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel, has said of the other occupied territories, "I don't want peace if I cannot have Judea and Samaria. The Jews did not come back to Israel to be safe but to build a nation on the lands given to us by the Bible."¹⁰¹ Thus, on the settlements issue as well as the Jerusalem question, moderates in Israel have clearly lost ground.

A third very inflammatory policy has been Israel's repeated air and ground missions into southern Lebanon. In conjunction with Christian militiamen inside Lebanon, the Israeli army and air force have attacked villages off and on since March

1978, in the hopes of rooting out Palestinian guerrillas whose raids into Israeli territory have repeatedly caused a public outcry and a call for Israeli retaliation. The high level of resulting Lebanese civilian casualties, while inviting almost universal criticism of Israel, has nonetheless succeeded in shocking the Lebanese villagers into pushing out many of the Palestinian terrorists harbored in their midst. Such grim pragmatism underlies many of Israel's hard-line policies.

There is an escalatory dynamic at work here, one which forces the Saudis to side firmly with the anti-U.S., anti-Camp David "rejectionist" camp of Arab countries. As Israel uses U.S. dollars to settle the West Bank, and U.S. planes to drop cluster bombs on Lebanese women and children, America becomes less acceptable as a political ally for all Arabs. After all, it was the U.S. mediation effort at Camp David which stripped the Arab world of its military leader, Egypt, while producing a negotiating formula which gave no participatory role to the Palestinians. As one Washington commentator has written: "The Saudis fear more an open rupture with the encircling radical Arab countries than a cooler relationship with the United States. Indeed, the Saudis estimate that Washington would nonetheless rush to the rescue if appeasement of radicals backfires."¹⁰²

Yet this alignment holds considerable peril as well as reward for Riyadh. The Arab radicals hold a very different notion of what is meant by a "solution" to the Palestinian

problem. The Saudis would welcome a secure Israeli state within pre-1967 borders; Crown Prince Fahd has said so repeatedly.¹⁰³ But this hardly jibes with the radical position described by Constantine C. Menges in a recent New York Times commentary. "It is an illusion," wrote Menges, "to believe that anything other than the disappearance of Israel would satisfy any of the...radical forces."¹⁰⁴ To corroborate this, one need only look at the Palestinian National Charter, a document which continues to command the allegiance of the various Palestinian factions. Even the diplomatically-ascendant Palestine Liberation Organization has not bowed to pressures to renounce or soften the Charter, which reads in part:¹⁰⁵

Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit. (article 2)

The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine. (from article 15)

...the liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence... (from article 22)

Beyond differences over the issue of an Israeli state, the Saudis differ with radical Arabs on the fundamental question of what is meant by "peace" in the Middle East generally. Whereas the Saudi princes are committed to preserving the class structure which elevates them to a privileged status, the radical Arabs have nationalist demands; they seek sweeping social and political realignments throughout the Arab world, starting, no doubt, with the oil-rich family monopolies along

the Gulf. Reports Claudia Wright, an English correspondent, "Many PLO leaders continue to say that the downfall of the Saudi regime is a precondition of their own success."¹⁰⁶

The Saudis have to wonder whether the Palestinians would be an even greater source of instability if they had a sovereign state of their own, from which they could engage in more effective foreign meddling. In fact, the most vociferous Arab advocates of a Palestinian state may not genuinely want it either. Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, an editor and writer for Al-Ahram (the major Egyptian daily newspaper), suggests three typologies for determining each state's interest in a peace settlement:

For some, if peace means restoring their occupied territory, it would cross out a loss (e.g., Egypt); for others, peace would represent a profit if it could secure the stability of their oil wealth (e.g., Saudi Arabia). But for still others, which have neither territory to recover nor oil priveleges to protect and for which opposition to Israel serves to enhance their pan-Arab credentials, peace would clearly be only a loss.¹⁰⁷

Under these circumstances, Israel has little incentive to relax its siege mentality.

Thus is the Saudi government caught in the odd position of leading a powerful Arab movement whose ultimate goals it abhors, against an Israeli pariah state whose ultimate strategic allegiances it shares.¹⁰⁸ Although moderation is its credo, Riyadh finds itself unable to shield its old ally Sadat from radical Arab venom, and equally powerless to acknowledge any understanding of Israel's pugnacious cynicism.

As the Saudis look to the U.S. as (in the words of a congressional analyst) "the only entity able to exert pressure on Israel to come to terms on a peace settlement,"¹⁰⁹ here again they encounter frustration, since the U.S. is determined not to feed perceptions--however inaccurate--that it, like Europe, is allowing foreign oil dependence to pervert policy goals.¹¹⁰

Furthermore, American leverage over Israel may in any case be overrated by the Saudis and other Arab states. Citing just one Israeli option, a Western correspondent has noted that, "If the United States, in the interests of a 'comprehensive' Middle East peace, sought to wring intolerable concessions from Israel, South Lebanon furnishes an ever-ready platform for an Israeli military response that would threaten the whole precarious Middle East order."¹¹¹ The Saudis must therefore be extremely careful not to overcommit themselves to the radical Arab diplomatic strangulation of Israel.

3. Inside Israel--More Pressures

Converging economic, political and social pressures inside Israel contribute to the country's tough stance internationally. The economy has been strapped by chronic inflation of over 100 percent. This has weakened Prime Minister Begin's political standing, forcing him to accommodate hard-line Knesset factions (as with the West Bank settlements issue and the Jerusalem legislation) perhaps more than he might have liked.

Time works against Israel's Jewishness. Of almost 5 million

Israelis, only 60 percent are Jews. The remainder are Palestinian Arabs--600,000 in Israel proper,¹¹² 1,100,000 in the West Bank, 375,000 in Gaza,¹¹³ and 12,000 in the Golan Heights.¹¹⁴ The Arab population's growth rate is 3.7 percent per year, compared to 1-1.5 percent for the country's Jews. More than half of the latter are Sephardim Jews, recently arrived from Arab countries, speaking Arabic, and bearing a cultural heritage which is more Islamic than Western. The minority Ashkenazim Jews, with a European Jewish heritage, are steadily declining in proportion to Israel's total population.

The Israeli government, moreover, already contains a disproportionately large representation of orthodox Jews from the Agudat Israel party, since the great majority of Israel's Jews are not orthodox. Thus, as the staunchest defenders of Zionism edge their government toward hostile diplomatic isolation regionally, they face long-term ethnic isolation within the country as well.¹¹⁵

The social climate in Israel reflects these creeping tensions. The Knesset has given initial approval to a law which punishes the carrying of Palestinian flags and the singing of Palestinian songs by up to three years in jail or as much as a \$5,000.00 fine.¹¹⁶ The deepening Jerusalem controversy has resulted in outbreaks of violence within the Arab quarter of the city in recent months.¹¹⁷ Although the Israeli political community has its moderate factions and even a very active peace movement, the government has had little trouble in recent years persuading

the population to let 15 percent of its Gross National Product be spent on defense.¹¹⁸

4. Defense and Militarism

From the day that it became an independent country, Israel had to fight to survive. In 63 days of combat during the 1948-1949 war, Israel lost one percent of its population. In the three wars since then (four, including the 1968-1970 "war of attrition"), Israel has always borne the disadvantage of scarce manpower. Because of this, Arab adversaries during the conflicts have sought to trap Israel in extended, stalemated high-casualty engagements, since equal losses benefited the Arab armies over time. Israeli defensive doctrine therefore relies on long-range weapons requiring a minimum of manpower.

The attempt to substitute high technology for troops has led Israel to a close defense relationship with the United States. Since Arab armies have steadily upgraded their own capabilities--for example, acquiring modern antitank missiles and sophisticated air defense systems--Israel has counted heavily on the United States to provide it with the most advanced American conventional weaponry in order that it could brandish regional technological superiority as a deterrent.

The primacy of the Israeli-American arms relationship is both feared and resented by Saudi Arabia. Within the Saudi armed forces, there are considerations of prestige and symbolism which affect arms acquisition policy. For example,

according to a New York Times report, in submitting their June 1980 request to Washington for the F-15 accessories, Saudi leaders "made it clear that they viewed the issue as an important test case in relations between the two countries."¹¹⁹ When two-thirds of the U.S. Senate signed a letter urging President Carter to refuse the sale, Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan told a group of officers graduating from the Staff College in Riyadh, "Our reply to this is that the kingdom will never ask for a weapon and be refused."¹²⁰

Acquiring high-grade American offensive weapons for prestige purposes is an indulgence which, if carried much further, threatens to backfire on the Saudis, for three reasons, which can be summarized as follows: first, since it would give the Saudis the theoretical technical capability to strike anywhere in Israel, upgrading their F-15s would heighten the likelihood of a preemptive Israeli strike; secondly, knowing of this capability, Riyadh's anti-Zionist political bedfellows would fully expect the Saudi F-15s to spearhead any Arab military initiative against Israel, and the resulting cost to Saudi Arabia could be much more than 45 warplanes; and thirdly, because of these two conditions, as the contest for advanced offensive weaponry between Israel and Saudi Arabia escalates, the United States must "choose sides" far more explicitly than it ever has, and Saudi Arabia can only lose in the bargain. Each of these points bears elaboration.

a. risk of preemptive Israeli strike on Saudi Arabia--
Israel's vulnerability to attrition in a prolonged low-level conflict with steady casualties was especially apparent in the 1968-1970 fighting with Egypt along the Suez Canal. To compensate for this shortcoming, Israel geared its war planning around high-firepower/low-manpower weapons. A heavy emphasis was placed on air superiority.¹²¹

In the aftermath of the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt, the Israelis pulled out of most of the Sinai, a move which enabled them to redeploy the armored units along other fronts, and to spend proportionately more defense dollars on, among other things, deep-penetration air capabilities. For this reason alone, any Saudi advances in long-range strike capability directly encroach upon Israel's "counter-attrition" strategy by eroding its margin of technological superiority, and place Saudi airfields at or near the top of Israel's list of priority targets.

Furthermore, since Israel's air superiority in the 1973 War nevertheless failed to spare it from a somewhat prolonged high-attrition situation (a daily average of 109 dead and 252 wounded for 21 days¹²²), the Israeli defense doctrine was thereafter modified to stress the necessity of achieving a decisive victory as soon as possible after the outset of hostilities. In the process, the option of preemption (which served Israel so well in 1967) came to be accepted as a potentially necessary--and therefore legitimate--component of Israel's

counter-Arab strategy.

Talk of preemptive strikes against Saudi Arabia first surfaced when Riyadh requested the initial purchase of 60 F-15 Eagles (45 F-15C fighters, 15 F-15D trainers) from Washington. Even without accessory fuel tanks, these aircraft would be able to reach the Israeli border within 12 minutes from Saudi airbases in Turayf, Gurayet and Tabuq, although only Tabuq is presently capable of accommodating the planes. In a detailed memorandum, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington warned: "During an Arab attack against Israel, should F-15s be stationed at or transferred to bases in the northwest, the threat posed to Israel may compel the Israeli Air Force (IAF), faced with a multifront war, to undertake immediate strikes against these bases and aircraft even if Saudi Arabia had not yet brought its forces into the war."¹²³

When the Saudis then made their June 1980 request for accessories to extend the F-15s' range and firepower, the Israeli Ambassador to Washington, Ephraim Evron, said very pointedly that if Riyadh were to receive these items, "the only target would be Israel."¹²⁴ Albert Marrin, a Professor of History at Yeshiva University in the Bronx, New York, has asserted that the Saudi acquisition of F-15 accessories would singlehandedly transform Israel's war plans vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia:

In every Middle East war thus far, the Israelis have refrained from the massive air attacks they are capable of mounting against that...country...out of the realization that, despite...some infantry contin-

gents, the Saudis were incapable of attacking them directly from their own territory. Give Saudi Arabia that capacity, and it is certain that the next Middle East war will begin with an Israeli strike against Tabuq and other airfields."¹²⁵

These perceptions, aired by Israel's officials and supporters in America, may or may not conform to the country's actual contingency plans; but they are nevertheless indicative of the gravity with which many Israelis view current Saudi defense efforts. In particular, their certainty that Israel would not hesitate to launch a preemptive strike in a crisis against an upgraded Saudi F-15 force should not be taken lightly by the Saudis or the Americans.

b. unavoidability of costly Saudi involvement in a future Arab-Israeli war-- As the preceding section points out, Saudi Arabia could find itself very much involved in a war with Israel without even firing a shot or crossing a border; and if Israel expects the Saudis to participate, so do the other prospective Arab combatants. Before the October War of 1973, Saudi Arabia paid for large shipments of Soviet arms to Egypt, arms which were then used in Egypt's Yom Kippur attack on Israel. During the war, the Saudis sent in a token force which fought alongside the Syrian army. In addition, by cutting its oil production by 30 percent, Saudi Arabia became the political leader of the 1973 Arab oil embargo.

Seven years and tens of billions of dollars in surplus oil revenues later, the Saudi defense establishment, with over 175 operational combat aircraft (the F-15s have not yet

been delivered), is talking to U.S. officials about acquiring an in-flight refueling capability, advanced AIM-9L air-to-air missiles, and AWACs for superior reconnaissance and target acquisition.¹²⁶ With Egypt now out of the potential combined Arab war effort, Saudi high technology military capabilities assume a central position in both the Arab and Israeli perspectives on a future conflict.

While all of this may confer a special prestige upon the Saudi armed forces, it also places them in a position of mounting danger by inviting combat responsibilities and security threats which increasingly outpace the kingdom's limited, albeit high-priced, defense capabilities. U.S. analysts have estimated that Israel's military capability has grown 190 percent since the 1973 war, while the Arab forces "at best" can only match 1973 levels without Egypt's help. In the words of one analyst, Israel "could easily defeat any combined Arab force within 14 days."¹²⁷

In spite of the unfavorable odds, the Saudi government seems to have realized that the kingdom will indeed be a "front-line" state in a future war with Israel. To prepare for this possibility, the Saudis have had to tailor their defense effort to match their resource endowment (plentiful financing, scarce trained or even untrained manpower, widespread basing network) with their security requirements (countering a technologically-advanced airborne threat, covering a huge territory).

Given these parameters, reliance on expensive advanced

defensive and offensive systems would seem appropriate. Like Israel, Saudi Arabia believes it must compensate for its low manpower with highly sophisticated long-range weaponry. And like Israel, the Saudis therefore find themselves turning to Washington for newer and better arms. Herein lies another major problem for Riyadh.

c. making the U.S. choose favorites-- It is true that Saudi Arabia can and does buy arms from France, Britain, Switzerland, Italy, and anyone else with whom it cares to deal, whereas Israel is more exclusively dependent on the U.S. for its arms acquisitions. But Riyadh's choice of the American F-15 Eagle over the French Mirage 2000 fighter plane is significant.

Saudis are under new MiG 4000

While their reasoning can only be guessed at here, the Saudis may ironically have welcomed the U.S. Congress-imposed restrictions which accompanied the sale. Had the Saudis acquired French combat fighters instead, with "no strings attached," other rejectionist Arab states could then have pressured Riyadh to purchase Mirages for them as well; more importantly, Israel would have faced far greater uncertainty than they do with a U.S.-regulated arms transfer. The American oversight therefore reduces the likelihood of mutual miscalculation and war.

Perhaps the most important explanation for Saudi Arabia's preference of American arms lies with the longstanding U.S.-Saudi defense relationship. American private companies and

military personnel have worked with the Saudi defense establishment since the first U.S. military mission arrived in 1943. Riyadh may have hoped to expand and perpetuate these bilateral ties with the F-15 deal. As Adeed I. Dawisha explains, the kingdom was shopping for much more than airplanes:

To the Saudis,...the purchase of the American plane ...represented a continuing American commitment to Saudi Arabia for at least the decade in which the planes would be delivered, the infrastructure built, and a training program fully established. In other words, the Saudi rulers felt that, at least during this period, the United States was bound to act as guarantor of their regime.¹²⁸

But a threshold of sorts may have been crossed with the 1980 Saudi request for conformal fuel pods, which would extend the range of the F-15s from approximately 400 to 580 nautical miles (approximately 670 statute miles), and for multiple ejection racks, which would enable the planes to carry much larger loads of bombs.¹²⁹ The United States, despite its increasing commitment to the security of the West's oil supplies, would be directly undercutting its own long-term policies and security objectives by tangibly upgrading the power projection capabilities of Israel's nominal adversaries.

Washington has no qualms about helping both Saudi Arabia and Israel prepare to defend themselves against any outside aggression; but now that each arms client has oriented its doctrine and--just as importantly--its prestige toward superior offensive capabilities, the U.S. has little choice but to qualify its support for one or the other, or both. For

America, the competitive escalation is self-defeating and thus unsupportable.

The Saudi national interest is not served by testing the upper limit of America's arms transfer policies to either country. To begin with, it is probably fair to state that America's security commitment to Israel ultimately outweighs its bond to Saudi Arabia, should the two policies ever be at odds, in spite of former Secretary of State Vance's 1979 pledge that, "We consider the territorial integrity and security of Saudi Arabia a matter of fundamental interest to the United States."¹³⁰ By forcing the U.S. to "show its hand," Riyadh could be forfeiting the deterrence which it presently derives from the general perception that America's true commitment to the kingdom exceeds its publicly stated one.

for the next 10 years.

But even if the reverse were true, and Saudi security were somehow granted a higher priority in Washington than that of Israel, this implausible situation would arguably degrade the prospects for stability in the Gulf just as much. Particularly if, as many experts believe, Israel has developed a nuclear weapons capability--or even if it has not, but is nevertheless perceived to have done so--the Arab states would probably be in greater peril, given their military inferiority, if Israel felt itself at all abandoned by the United States.

* * * * *

To summarize, the Saudis must prepare for the possibility of another Arab war with Israel. For the kingdom to think

Why?
be more
explicit.

that it could avoid involvement in the conflict is unrealistic. Even before there was any official discussion of Saudi Arabia purchasing advanced combat aircraft, in September 1977, Israel's former intelligence chief Mier Amit stated unequivocally that Saudi oilfields would be a target in the next Arab-Israeli war.¹³¹ With Riyadh steadily upgrading its offensive armory, the question now is: how much additional firepower will the Saudis impel Israel to designate against targets within the kingdom? For all of the reasons given above, a Saudi policy of equating friendship, prestige, and security with the acquisition of the fanciest, costliest, most lethal and longest-range offensive weaponry is misguided and very dangerous.

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E. Iraq

Saudi Arabia's most powerful contiguous neighbor is Iraq. Possessing probably the world's second largest oil reserves (after Saudi Arabia) and an army over five times the size of the Saudi army, Iraq is a headstrong political actor with major ambitions, including leadership of the Arab world and the nonaligned movement as well.¹³³ Along with the many concerns beyond Saudi Arabia's eastern, southern, and western borders, therefore, the Saudi royal family must take no less cognizance of the political and security interests of President Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime in Baghdad.

Relations between the two countries in recent decades have

reflected the enmities between their rival tribes and Islamic potentates of centuries past. In the 1920s and 1930s, Ibn Saud feuded with the Hashemite dynasty to the north, which was overthrown on July 14, 1958. In the late 1960s, reacting to the Saudis' persistent support for the deposed royalists in Yemen, Iraq undertook an extensive military buildup. The radical Baathist party, which assumed power on July 17, 1968 in a bloodless coup, soon cultivated closer ties with the Soviet Union. In April 1972, Baghdad signed a fifteen-year treaty of friendship and cooperation with Moscow, a pact which opened the way for a substantial flow of Soviet arms to Iraq in the ensuing years.

For much of the 1970s, the Saudi royal family maintained a diplomatic coolness in its dealings with Iraq. Riyadh's anti-communism was partially responsible, heightened both by the sense of regional Soviet encroachment and by the rise of the Iraqi Communist Party as the largest and most respected in the Arab world. Other alienating factors included the Baghdad regime's revolutionary dogma, its ruthless tactics--involving bloody government purges and mass detentions and deportations of undesirables--and its secularistic approach to ruling, which understresses the leadership's predominantly Sunni Muslim heritage.

In addition, Saudi Arabia has seen a number of its neighbors around the Gulf victimized by Iraqi aggression and subversion in recent years. Kuwait was nearly overrun by Iraq

in 1961, but then rescued by the diplomatic intervention of Great Britain and the Arab League; a second attack in 1973 was similarly subdued. Baghdad's chief goal was to gain control of the two Kuwaiti islands of Bubiyan and Warba, which command the maritime approaches to Iraq's Umm Qasr naval base.¹³⁴ To the east, Iraq has claimed sovereignty over Iran's oil-rich province of Khuzistan ("Arabistan" to non-Persians) and has continually funneled support to the Arabistan Nationalist Movement there. In Oman, Iraq has aided Marxist rebels in the Dhofar region. For several reasons, therefore, the Saudis have long viewed Iraq as an unfriendly and unsettling force in the Gulf.

In the last two years, however, the Riyadh-Baghdad relationship has slowly but steadily reversed itself and struck an uncommonly friendly and cooperative tone. While such speculation may be premature, the rapid convergence of both countries' security interests in recent months, unforeseeable by either, suggests the potential for a powerful and enduring partnership, capable of dominating the Gulf and, in time, OPEC as well.

The first step in reducing mutual tensions came in 1976, when all outstanding Saudi-Iraqi border questions were resolved through international arbitration. Iraq may have sensed a need to stabilize its ties wherever possible, since the regime was at this time overburdened on several fronts. Externally,

the Iraqi rulers were waging a war of assassinations with the rival Baathist regime in Syria. Internally, the Kurds in northeastern Iraq, supported by the Shah of Iran and others, had been tying down a sizable proportion of the country's armed forces since the early 1970s.

After more than a half-million Kurds were forcibly relocated in the south, the country's Arab Shi'ites (who, although ruled by Sunni Arabs, constitute a 55-65 percent majority in Iraq) and communists started to cause problems. Revolts beginning in January 1977 were bloodily suppressed, and the regime of President Hassan Al-Bakr resorted to harsh measures on many more occasions as the Iranian revolution blossomed across the border.

A substantial thaw in Saudi-Iraqi relations took place in 1978, as both regimes came to fear that Iran's militant fundamentalism could spread into their respective populations. In January 1979 the Interior Ministries of both governments began to coordinate programs, and political talks soon followed. The next month, Iraq and Saudi Arabia concluded an agreement providing for technical and administrative exchanges, as well as cooperation on mutual security. Since then, Iraqi intelligence has provided information to the sheikhdoms on clandestine arms shipments to possible troublemakers within their borders.¹³⁵ After regime strongman Saddam Hussein took over the Presidency from Al-Bakr on July 16, 1979, he opened discussions with Riyadh on prospects for joint arms purchases

from France (see U.S. section, below).¹³⁶

Two major developments had prompted the Iraqi Baathist government to reassess and redefine the basis for its relationships around the Gulf. First was the souring of Iraq's relations with the Soviet Union, beginning in 1977 after the less-than-secure Al-Bakr regime uncovered Moscow's hand in the growing communist agitation within Iraq's armed forces. Suspected communist organizers in the army were executed in May and December of 1978. Iraq's Communist Party was then forbidden to associate with the National Progressive Front, and trade with Eastern Europe was cut back. Thousands of Marxists were jailed throughout 1979; many others fled to the PDRY for refuge, but were pursued there by Iraqi assassins.

Aden's growing intimacy with the Soviet Union, meanwhile, prompted Iraq to invite the various South Yemeni opposition groups to Baghdad in March 1980, and to sponsor an umbrella organization called the National Grouping of Patriotic Forces.¹³⁷ A similar policy evolved toward Syria after unity talks between the Syrian and Iraqi Baathists collapsed in July 1979. Syria's President Hafez al-Assad turned to the Soviet Union for arms and protection against his numerous enemies, and the war of assassinations resumed.

Iraq's leaders came to believe that the Soviet military presence in Ethiopia, Afghanistan and the PDRY, plus Moscow's excessive arms transfers and intelligence activities in several other Arab countries, were part of a long-term campaign to

subvert the region's rulers and secure control over the Gulf's oil, gas and sea-lanes. In arriving at this view, the Iraqi leadership found itself in strategic agreement with its Moscow-fearing neighbors in Riyadh.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, a senior Baath party official, expressed the changed outlook of the governing Revolutionary Command Council by declaring: "If the Soviets invade one inch of Saudi Arabia, Iraqi troops will be fighting the Soviets before the Saudis can mobilize."¹³⁸ Significantly, Iraq voted with the majority in the United Nations in demanding that the Soviet Union withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

The second major development reorienting Baghdad's regional perspective was the rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in early 1979. The year before, fearing the Shah's displeasure, the Baathist regime had pushed Khomeini out of Iraq after his thirteen years of exile in the holy center of Najaf. Once in power in Iran, Khomeini wasted no time in calling on Iraq's Shi'ites to overthrow the Baathists. In response, Iraq stepped up the flow of Soviet arms to dissident Arabs in Iran's Khuzi-
stan province.¹³⁹ Two Ayatollahs, including Khomeini's personal envoy in Najaf, were arrested and jailed in the summer of 1979, as Iraqi authorities imposed martial law in the country's Shi'ite cities.

In April 1980, isolated incidents of Iran-Iraq hostility led to a diplomatic war of words and then to armed clashes along the border. In one week alone, President Hussein deported

15,000 Persians from southern Iraq.¹⁴⁰ In the meantime, Iraq formalized its mutual security guarantees with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait--a country the Iraqis had invaded less than a decade earlier.

In September 1980, the conflict escalated into a full-blown war. Iraq and Iran traded heavy aerial attacks on each other's capitals, airfields and key oil facilities; ground units engaged along a 300-mile front to the north of the Shatt el-Arab estuary; and naval forces fought around the major coastal oil and petrochemical installations. Iraq's military superiority quickly established itself, and Baghdad set forth three demands: acceptance of Iraqi claims to the entire 120-mile Shatt el-Arab waterway; relinquishment by Teheran of lands forfeited in 1975 by Iraq under the Algiers Agreement, a pact reflecting the Shah's success in pressuring Baghdad by supporting Iraq's Kurds; and future noninterference by Iran in Iraq's internal affairs. Iraq also made known its desire to see the Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa returned by Iran to the Arab world (see Iran section, above).

By redirecting its security planning to counter the internal and external threats posed by Moscow-led communists and Khomeini-led Shi'ites, the regime of Saddam Hussein came to embrace most of the Gulf monarchies, whose strategic concerns he now shares. Hussein's August 7, 1980 visit to Saudi Arabia was the first such visit by an Iraqi president since the republic was formed in 1958. A joint communiqué issued by President Hussein and King Khalid following the summit pledged both countries to

sever political and economic ties to any country accepting Israel's formal annexation of Jerusalem; nine other Arab countries soon followed with identical threats. Given the considerable military and economic assets of OPEC's two leading members, if Baghdad and Riyadh continue to harmonize their political policies and objectives, they could significantly alter the power equation in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia's attachment to the United States is a major impediment to such a development. Iraq's Baathists have never had formal diplomatic relations with Washington, and Saddam Hussein has said that he will not seek them in the future.¹⁴¹ Hussein's stated regional strategy is to reduce the influence of both superpowers; Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the smaller sheikhdoms, he believes, can effectively police the oil shipping lanes without either a U.S. or a Soviet presence. In Oman, Sultan Qabus' arrangements to provide discretionary basing privileges to the United States drew such vehement opposition from Baghdad that Jordan's King Hussein saw the need to step in and mediate between the two; interestingly, the Saudis remained silent on the issue.

Perhaps Saudi Arabia's security is enhanced by this new political friendship with Iraq; certainly a cooperative relationship is preferable to the situation in the mid-1970s, when a hostile Iraq was closely identified with the U.S.S.R.'s security interests. It may well be that their new ties to Iraq have emboldened the Saudis to "play the rejectionist card,"

thereby to ingratiate themselves further with Camp David's Arab opponents. Riyadh's regional influence and prestige is greater in 1980 than ever, bolstered by King Khalid's demonstrated commitment to the Muslim holy places of East Jerusalem, and Crown Prince Fahd's uncharacteristic saber-rattling.

But one must wonder what price the Saudis will pay if they continue to assist Iraq in its own pursuit of regional supremacy. As Riyadh lends itself to further bilateral acts of diplomatic bravado against Israel, it should be clear that Saudi Arabia, not Iraq, offers closer and less-well-defended targets for Israeli aggression in a crisis or a war. Moreover, since the United States' response to any unraveling of the Camp David peace framework must be to expedite the expansion of its own military capabilities in the region to safeguard Western "vital interests" in the Gulf, the Saudis may at some point find it impossible to retain the good will of both "allies". A more isolated and threatened Israel is likely to receive greater American military aid, in which case the U.S. would draw still heavier criticism from Saudi Arabia's anti-Zionist political bedfellows, including Iraq. Thus, by closing ranks with the forces which indirectly threaten American interests, the Saudis are unintentionally encouraging the U.S. to take actions which are certain to widen the political distance--at least publicly--between Riyadh and Washington.

Unless and until Western oil consumers relieve their dependence on Saudi oil, the Saudis need not offer the U.S. any

political quid pro quos for the protection of their oilfields. Ironically enough, it seems that by threatening holy war against Israel, Riyadh is gaining greater protection, both from a gratified Iraq and from a worried United States. But this policy line is not cost-free. Saudi Arabia risks trading a low-profiled American presence coordinated with Riyadh for a much more conspicuous U.S. presence over which the Saudis would have far less influence. In this sense, Baghdad's anti-superpower crusade, by enlisting a hitherto unabashed supporter of American security interests in the Gulf, may induce an escalation, not a reduction, of superpower competition in the region.

The Hussein regime has not yet succeeded in forcing Saudi Arabia to choose in any way between its new security relationship with Iraq and its longstanding one with the United States, and it may never achieve a position to effectively do so. But the growing Riyadh-Baghdad friendship could in time exert a significant influence on Saudi security doctrine, threat perception, force structure, arms procurement and policy objectives.

F. Other Relationships

There are several other regional actors and issues with which that Saudis must carefully deal. The fragmented and volatile situation in Lebanon threatens to deteriorate into a second civil conflict, raising the risk of another Arab-Israeli war. In Syria, the Alawite Baathist regime of President

Hafez al-Assad is under siege from three groups: the country's Sunni Muslim majority (who have historically governed Syria), rival Iraqi Baathists, and Muslim Brotherhood terrorists. In a desperate campaign to stay in power, Assad has diverted fully 55 percent of the national budget for defense;¹⁴² his regime is liberally arresting, torturing and executing suspected terrorists while inviting massive Soviet security collaboration.¹⁴³

Libya's President, Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi, has been stockpiling Soviet arms far in excess of his 35,000-man army's capacity to use them.¹⁴⁴ The construction of new military facilities in the Libyan desert increases the threat of attack against Egypt and greatly improves the U.S.S.R.'s and Cuba's ability to stage combat operations in the Horn of Africa. Qaddafi and Assad have now agreed to a Libyan-Syrian merger,¹⁴⁵ the intent of which is to strengthen hard-line Soviet-backed anti-Zionist efforts in the Arab world.

Egypt's peace with Israel, achieved and preserved largely through the solo efforts of President Anwar al-Sadat, is by no means guaranteed to outlive Sadat himself. In Jordan, King Hussein is torn between the desire to avoid being attacked by Israel, a dependence upon "rejectionist" Arab annual subsidies of roughly \$1 billion per year,¹⁴⁶ and a fear of antagonizing the omnipresent PLO, whose Al Fatah guerrilla forces he bloodily ejected in the "Black September" crackdown of 1970. In addition to the Palestinians, the region's Kurds continue their trans-

national struggle for a sovereign Kurdish state.

These and other volatile situations demand skillful diplomacy on the part of the Saudis, who must continually endeavor to prevent war, minimize radical unrest, hold communist influence at bay, and at the same time elevate their own standing in Arab and Islamic circles. It is a complex and difficult challenge.

instructive
 material + clearly reflects a great deal of work.
 This is a very excellent
 section. It contains some excellent
 However do try to avoid the "Army handbook"
 approach to analysis. What needs to be
 & brought out are some of your
 ideas (theses, hypotheses) as to
 what all this means. So far
 no Bloomfield theme has
 emerged.

III. THE SUPERPOWER DIMENSION

Many facets of U.S. and U.S.S.R. activities in the Middle East have been detailed in the preceding sections. Our purpose here will be to suggest the nature of American and Soviet interests in the region, to note Saudi perceptions of each one's motives, and to explore the various alternatives open to the policymakers in Riyadh, whose political survival may depend upon how they choose to deal with the superpowers. In this context, the role of European countries will be analysed as well.

A. The U.S.S.R.

"Since the 1820s all strong Russian rulers have aimed at Russian military domination of Afghanistan as a step towards a southward expansion."

--William E. Griffith, Massachusetts
Institute of Technology¹⁴⁷

"Despite the panic-mongering allegations of US propaganda, no one will see Soviet tanks and soldiers on the shores of the Persian Gulf or other warm seas."

--Georgi Arbatov, Soviet Institute of
the U.S.A. and Canada¹⁴⁸

"They want to get their hands on the wealth of the Arabian Peninsula."

--Qabus bin Said, Sultan of Oman¹⁴⁹

Soviet behavior beyond the U.S.S.R.'s borders has been interpreted and explained many different ways. The singular political goal of promoting the ultimate global triumph of

Marxist-Leninist principles of government provides one explanation. A related element is the bureaucratic momentum and appetite for conquest generated in an inherently expansionist power whose greatest foreign policy asset is military strength.¹⁵⁰ A third motivating factor (emphasized by Saudi Oil Minister Sheikh Yamani, among others¹⁵¹) is the Soviet Union's growing need for imported energy, particularly oil and natural gas.¹⁵² Fourthly, there is the desire to counter the perceived threats posed by the U.S.S.R.'s chief adversaries, the U.S. and China; by acquiring a degree of control over the availability of Middle East oil to Europe, Japan and many Third World consumers, the Soviets could not only pressure the U.S. directly, but they could also effectively neutralize America's allies and strategic materials suppliers with the ever-present threat of an oil supply disruption. A fifth possibility is that the U.S.S.R. believes it necessary to forcibly prevent the Middle Eastern Islamic resurgence from advancing further eastward into its own Islamic republics in Central Asia.¹⁵³

Long before the December 1979 Soviet thrust into Afghanistan, the Saudis viewed Soviet activities in the Gulf and the Horn of Africa with trepidation and suspicion. These fears, based originally upon their strong antipathy toward the U.S.S.R.'s atheism and revolutionary ideology, have recently taken on a blunt geostrategic character as Soviet encroachment has progressed in the region. The New York Times reported in 1979

that "senior" Saudi officials had "charged that the Soviet aim was eventually to deny the West access to oil from the Persian Gulf and ...that the Russians were 'expanding their regional predominance'." ¹⁵⁴ It is precisely this thinking which lay behind the (successful) Saudi offers to "buy" regime and tribal loyalties away from the U.S.S.R. in Somalia and the YAR in recent years. The suspicion that Moscow was involved in the 1979 Mecca attack (see first chapter) has certainly kept Saudi apprehensions alive.

To compound Riyadh's fears, the fall of the Shah and the termination of his regional security contribution seem to have shaken Saudi confidence in America's ability to deter Soviet advances to the Gulf; since early 1979 the Saudis have shown a decreased willingness to risk antagonizing the U.S.S.R. with their words and deeds. For Moscow, new external opportunities as well as looming domestic energy shortages appear to have inspired a Soviet diplomatic offensive aimed at improving relations with Iraq and the Gulf monarchies (of which only Kuwait presently has formal ties to Moscow). When the Khomeini regime cut off Iranian natural gas shipments to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1979, the U.S.S.R.'s dependence upon oil supplies from Iraq correspondingly increased. Saddam Hussein, once in power, could therefore proceed with his rhetorical anti-superpower crusade secure in the knowledge that Soviet arms and diplomatic leverage would nonetheless be available to him.

Riyadh has responded to the new conciliatory tone in the U.S.S.R.'s Gulf diplomacy. The prospects for normalizing

Saudi-Soviet ties were officially discussed for the first time in June 1979. Soon afterward, Crown Prince Fahd surprised many Western observers with his deferential remark in a Le Monde interview that, "We are aware of the important role played by the Soviet Union in international politics; it is our wish that in playing this role it will go on backing the just demands of the Arabs."¹⁵⁵

After the U.S.S.R.'s move into Afghanistan in December 1979, the Saudis took the lead in organizing the January 1980 Islamabad Muslim conference to condemn the Soviet invasion and to aid the Afghan freedom fighters and refugees; Riyadh's pledge was \$25 million.¹⁵⁶ Saudi Arabia became the first country to boycott the Olympic Games in Moscow. At the same time, however, Egypt's President Sadat castigated Riyadh for permitting Soviet military aircraft to continually overfly Saudi Arabia en route to the PDRY.¹⁵⁷

There are several possible explanations for the Saudis' apparent ambivalence in their dealings with the Soviet Union. Appeasement has already been implicitly suggested above; whereas the U.S. mainland is over 8,000 miles from Saudi Arabia, the Soviets could now mount a major strike from Afghanistan, less than 900 miles away. Riyadh may also be attempting to demonstrate a new even-handedness toward the superpowers, partly as a signal to Baghdad that President Saddam Hussein's friendship is valued by the Saudi leaders. A third possibility, suggested by Sadat, is that the Saudis are using the Moscow

relationship as a lever to obtain a stronger and more credible security commitment from the United States.¹⁵⁸

It is highly unlikely that the Saudis have in any way diminished their long-standing fear and disapproval of Soviet intrusion in the region. In the Muslim political arena, and through contacts with Washington officials, the Saudis have clearly identified Soviet designs as a major threat to stability in the Gulf. In all likelihood, the royal family's assessment of Soviet motives closely corresponds to the following scenario, described in Soviet Analyst:

The USSR is already exporting to the West oil needed by Comecon because of the necessity of earning dollars to buy technology. And why should the Saudis accept rubles for their oil when they can only be spent in the USSR to buy equipment inferior in quality to that available in the West? The only solution which would fully satisfy Soviet requirements would be for a pro-Moscow regime to take over in Saudi Arabia, make a 'People's Republic' and join Comecon. This would be easier to encourage with Soviet 'diplomatic representation' re-established in Riyadh."¹⁵⁹

In sum, the Saudis are probably uncertain how best to deal with the gentle overtures from Moscow. Having witnessed the U.S.S.R.'s rapid armored thrust into Afghanistan, its huge arms and advisory build-ups in South Yemen and Syria/Libya, and the prepositioning of advanced Soviet weaponry on virtually every side of the kingdom, the Saudi rulers may have come to the conclusion that only by strengthening the common bonds among the region's Arab countries--either through pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism--can the growth of Soviet military power in the Gulf be successfully arrested.

Such an approach, however, is credible to Soviet-supported Arab countries only if Saudi Arabia itself gives the appearance of sacrificing the support of its own superpower patron, namely the United States. In this regard, the joint diplomatic initiatives with Iraq have helped to create the impression of increased Saudi solidarity with all Arab countries, including anti-American ones. But the United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia is very complex; it rests on an extensive network of interdependencies, developed over several decades. For this reason, it is worth discussing the nature of those ties, to suggest what costs and risks might accompany various Saudi moves to distance itself politically from Washington.

B. The United States

1. Economic Ties

It is a well-known fact that the secure flow of Saudi oil to America, Europe and Japan represents a vital interest to the United States. Less obvious, perhaps, is the fact that this economic dependence runs in both directions. The United States is Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner. It is also the repository of at least \$60 billion in Saudi assets. Over 85 percent of the kingdom's total wealth is denominated in U.S. dollars, since the American financial markets are the only ones capable of handling so great a volume of currency.¹⁶⁰

A Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, set up in June 1974, provides a permanent mechanism for consultation between

the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and the Saudi Minister of Finance and National Economy. American secondary schools and universities presently accommodate 13,000 Saudi students,¹⁶¹ most of them seeking to acquire the necessary financial and technical skills to manage the kingdom's colossal investments at home and abroad. The royal family, therefore, has a number of powerful incentives for supporting the economic health of America and its currency. Within OPEC, Saudi Arabia's unwillingness to raise prices as rapidly or as steeply as most of the other 12 member countries--resulting in a two-tier (and, from June to September 1980, a three-tier) oil pricing system--is largely attributable to this concern for stability in the world economy.

2. Defense Ties

Complementing their economic interdependence is the substantial U.S.-Saudi security relationship. Since the end of 1942, when President Roosevelt facilitated U.S. lend-lease assistance to the Saudis with the words, "I hereby find that the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States,"¹⁶² America has provided military advisory assistance to the Saudi kingdom.

Thirty-seven years after Roosevelt's pledge, President Carter reiterated the American commitment to protect the Gulf's oil supplies "by any means necessary, including military force."¹⁶³ Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, elaborated on the Carter Doctrine by surmising that

the United States would be willing to commit American forces to counter any outside aggression against Saudi Arabia.¹⁶⁴

In the defense sphere as in the economic sphere, American reliance on Saudi cooperation is reciprocated--in this case, surpassed--by Saudi dependence on U.S. assistance. Although there is no U.S.-Saudi defense treaty,¹⁶⁵ over ninety percent of the kingdom's imported military advice, official and privately-contracted, comes from the United States. America's military mission in Saudi Arabia, informally begun during World War II, now oversees approximately 15,000 (mostly civilian) personnel.¹⁶⁶ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has since 1965 assisted on Saudi defense-related infrastructural projects; the value of construction projects supervised by the Corps was \$20 billion in 1979.¹⁶⁷ Private U.S. companies work closely with the various branches of the Saudi defense establishment: Lockheed and Raytheon assist with air defense modernization; Bendix Corp. with the regular army; Vinnell Corp. with the National Guard; AVCO Corp. with the Coast Guard; TWA with the Saudi national airline; and so forth.

Saudi reliance on American defense expertise rose sharply in the late 1960s, after the kingdom's vulnerability was exposed in the Yemen conflict. Riyadh's primary concern was with air defense, since Yemen-based Egyptian planes had easily penetrated Saudi air space and bombed southern villages in 1962. The United States offered the services of a single fighter squadron, but the Saudis opted instead for an air defense system of their

own, to be operated by British civilians under contract.¹⁶⁸

After Britain announced its impending withdrawal from the Gulf in 1968, and pro-Soviet radical Baathists came to power in Iraq (also in 1968), the Saudi royal family felt it necessary to upgrade the country's overall defense capabilities. Under U.S. guidance, a twelve-year naval development program was initiated in 1971, followed by a \$3 billion Air Force modernization plan (Operation Peace Hawk), which centered on the use of the American F-5 aircraft. Throughout the 1970s, the United States provided arms and training for all branches of the Saudi defense establishment. By the end of 1979, the aggregate value of American arms sales (approved, not delivered) to the Saudi government exceeded \$25.6 billion.¹⁶⁹ The Peace Sun Program, built around the 60 American F-15 Eagle aircraft, will perpetuate the U.S. advisory role well into the 1980s.

Direct U.S. military presence has never been substantial in the Middle East (not counting the Mediterranean Sixth Fleet). Iran was designated as the guardian of American security interests in the Gulf under a Vietnam-inspired U.S. policy of avoiding direct presence by providing support to indigenous armies, a doctrine first enunciated by President Nixon at Guam in July 1969. The U.S. also undertook to help the militarily-weak Saudis construct a credible deterrent to any external attack on the oilfields.

Yet for all the tangible security benefits inherent in advisory assistance and arms transfers, neither of these have

ever served to duplicate the unique power projection function traditionally carried out by U.S. naval warships "showing the flag." Beginning in 1949, the United States maintained a small naval force in the Gulf; known as the Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR), the U.S. vessels were homeported in Bahrain at Jufair, under an informal arrangement with the United Kingdom. Following Britain's 1971 pullout from the area, the U.S. requested and received permission from the new government of Bahrain to use its Manama naval facility for the MIDEASTFOR contingent.

American support of Israel in the 1973 War led to Arab pressure on Bahrain to abrogate its basing agreement with the U.S., and after prolonged negotiations, the MIDEASTFOR homeporting privileges were officially revoked in June 1977. Under a new diplomatic arrangement, the U.S. has continued to maintain a Gulf naval contingent (expanded in 1979 from 3 to 5 ships) which enjoys temporary docking privileges each year at a number of Bahraini and Saudi ports. The "MIDEASTFOR" designation has been discontinued, and an Administrative Support Unit of sixty American officers remains on duty in Manama to support American ship and aircraft visits.¹⁷⁰

3. Recent Discord

Economically and militarily, therefore, the Saudis and the Americans have built a solid relationship over several decades, an association based upon common interests and reciprocal dependencies. Since early 1979, however, the U.S.-Saudi rela-

tionship has come under considerable strain. The Iranian revolution and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan have raised the level of tension and apprehension in both Riyadh and Washington.

a. Bilateral Strains--America's concern over its excessive dependence on foreign oil supplies has led to the decision to create a 660-million-barrel "strategic petroleum reserve." The \$20 billion stockpiling facility, if full, would contain the equivalent of 38 days' national supply of imported oil. Since this would eliminate U.S. vulnerability to a short-term oil supply interruption, the Saudis would lose their single most effective lever on the American policymaking process, and by extension, a degree of prestige and influence in the Arab world. The issue is thus emotionally charged for both parties.¹⁷¹

The Saudis have likewise taken several steps in the past two years to reduce their dependence on the United States, with resulting bad feelings in Washington. Riyadh has recently signed a number of bilateral oil supply contracts with European governments, thereby undercutting the potential for U.S.-led economic (and arguably, political) policy solidarity among Western oil-importing countries. The Saudis have decreased the level of their investment in U.S. Government securities, even though their U.S. dollar revenues have continued to rise.

Politically, Riyadh offended the Carter administration in 1979 by expelling the CIA station chief and then floating the idea of normalizing ties with the Soviet Union. The May 1980

diplomatic discord surrounding the televised showing in America of the controversial film "Death of a Princess," a dramatization of Saudi society portraying corruption, promiscuity and sacrilege, was irritating for both governments.

b. The Palestine Dispute--At the core of current U.S.-Saudi frictions is the Palestine dispute. Previous sections of this paper have analysed the way in which Arab-Israeli differences are driving a political wedge between Riyadh and Washington. Saudi Arabia's refusal to support the Camp David peace process reflects a frustration, according to an Egyptian journalist, "that in spite of the 'special relationship' between Riyadh and Washington, the United States has systematically neglected to follow Saudi advice on the peace drive and only informed them of its moves after the fact."¹⁷²

As a result of this and other interconnecting factors, including the Saudi self-image as leader of the Islamic world, the path of least political resistance for Riyadh has been to profess a strong commitment to Palestinian statehood and to collaborate with some determinedly anti-American Arab governments, most notably Iraq.

King Khalid appears to have found a new diplomatic comrade-in-arms in Iraq's President Saddam Hussein. The combined political clout of these two OPEC giants, if further consolidated, could raise major complications for the U.S.-Saudi security relationship in the coming years. The regional underpinnings and implications of a new Riyadh-Baghdad axis are explored in

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some detail above; here it will be useful to discuss the ways in which American and Saudi security cooperation could be undermined by Riyadh's foray into "rejectionist" politics.

Iraq's avowed goal is to eliminate superpower influence from the Gulf. Claudia Wright has interpreted Iraq's regional diplomacy as a "campaign designed to undermine Israel's economic links with Europe," so that the United States will be forced to choose between support for Israel and solidarity with Europe. Iraq hopes to extract pledges from the European nations not to allow the United States to use Europe's military facilities for any American operations in the Middle East; the strategy, says Ms. Wright, is to "neutralize" U.S. bases in Portugal, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and (presumably the British bases in) Cyprus.¹⁷³

In close conjunction with Iraq, the Saudi government in August 1980 threatened to cut off oil supplies to any country recognizing Israel's annexation of Jerusalem; holy war was even mentioned. This action appears to have advanced the Iraqi strategy, as the United States subsequently found itself torn between Israel and the Europeans in a UN Security Council vote on a resolution criticizing Israel's Jerusalem policy; while all fourteen of the other members voted against Israel, the U.S. abstained--thereby not only isolating the United States within the Council, but also deeply upsetting Israel, which had expected a U.S. veto. If and when Israel moves to formally annex the Golan Heights (see above), the Arab world is certain

to react no less forcefully, and the United States will be caught once again in the middle of a no-win situation, faced perhaps with even costlier choices.

Is this what Riyadh hopes to accomplish--the unmaking of America's geopolitical potency? Before dismissing the notion as preposterous, as it clearly seems, we must weigh the alternative policies for Saudi Arabia. In the past, the Saudis could play an ill-defined "moderate" role, conveniently traversing the gray area between the extremes of overt pro-Americanism and explicit anti-Zionism. They no longer enjoy this luxury, for several reasons.

First, in the wake of Iran's revolution, Iraq has developed ambitions to become the leader of the Arab world; the September 1980 assault against Iran was largely intended to demonstrate Iraq's regional military supremacy. Thus challenged, the Saudi royal family has missed no opportunity to enhance its own power and prestige within Islamic institutions, OPEC, and the Palestinian movement.

Secondly, whereas before 1978 Saudi Arabia's military contribution was never considered significant in aggregate Arab defense considerations, the removal of Egypt from the equation and the planned acquisition of 60 F-15 jet fighters by Riyadh has elevated the kingdom to "front-line" status in the next war with Israel. Burdened with this new "commitment" (borne of Arab expectations), the Saudis may feel more secure participating as a bona fide leader of the Arabs than they would if the formulation of pro-

Palestinian politics were left entirely to more radical Arab influences.

The third reason why the Saudis can no longer play the Palestinian issue on both sides is that the dispute has landed squarely on the one territory which is absolutely non-negotiable by any of the Muslim disputants, namely the Old City of Jerusalem, site of the Al-Aksa Mosque. The royal family's very legitimacy rests on its role as guardian of the traditions and holy places of Islam. When the Israeli Knesset annexed East Jerusalem, it therefore obliged King Khalid to take up the leadership of the rejectionist Arab coalition. This explains Crown Prince Fahd's immoderate statements that, "The talk about peace with Israel has become a kind of illusion," and that war has become "the only answer to this Zionist religious and racist arrogance."¹⁷⁴ It furthermore explains Riyadh's willingness to pursue a course of action--i.e., collaboration with Iraq's political strategy--which explicitly contravenes American interests.

4. Torn Between Washington and Baghdad: New Security Dilemmas for Riyadh

A Saudi policy of cooperation with Iraq holds several advantages for Riyadh. First, by eliminating bilateral tensions, it minimizes the chances that Iraq's vastly superior army will ever be directed against Saudi Arabia. Secondly, Iraq's involvement in the new Gulf defense quasi-alliance (see Iraq section, above) makes all of the sheikhdoms significantly more secure against external attack by either Iran or the Soviet Union.

Thirdly, Saudi Arabia's standing in the Arab world is greatly enhanced by the perception that the royal family has decided finally to join forces with the majority of Arab states in pressing the Palestinian cause at the expense of the Camp David peace framework. Fourthly, Iraq's "anti-superpower" political dogma, as a unifying principle for the Arab world, helps the Saudis in their never-ending drive to root out Soviet influence from the region.

The anti-superpower doctrine, however, may be a two-edged sword for the Saudis, who neither wish to see Saddam Hussein succeed in becoming a Nasser-like pan-Arab potentate, nor desire to forfeit the security guarantee embodied in their present ties to the United States. Regarding the first prospect, it is possible that King Khalid cooperated with President Hussein on the August 1980 Jerusalem sanctions as much to avoid being upstaged by Hussein as to enlist his economic muscle. The Saudi royal family prizes its Islamic and Arab leadership roles, and would not willingly yield to a radical usurper, no matter how well-endowed economically, militarily or ideologically. For this reason, a swift and decisive Iraqi rout in the war with Iran would have been viewed with some misgivings in Riyadh, despite the Saudis' dislike of the Khomeini regime in Teheran.

As for the latter concern--losing American protection--here the consequences of a Riyadh-Baghdad political coalition are more complicated. Given America's continuing vulnerability

to a disruption of Saudi oil supplies, a political estrangement from the Saudis could be expected to produce stronger support for three policy directions within the U.S. Congress: reduction of American dependence upon foreign oil; a new openness in dealings with Iraq; and the upgrading of American military capabilities close to the Gulf region. The substance of these U.S. policies, and their potential impact on Saudi interests, merit close examination.

a. reduction of U.S. dependence on foreign oil--Although the noncommunist world presently holds unprecedented levels of petroleum inventories,¹⁷⁵ the economies of Europe, Japan and, to a lesser extent, the United States are still critically dependent upon foreign oil. Alternative energy sources and conservation programs have not alleviated this dependency as of yet, either because they still are not cost-effective compared to oil, or because the conversion to other forms of energy is not feasible in the short-term. In the United States and Germany, interest groups have inhibited increased reliance on nuclear energy. Other impediments to energy conversion relate either to the influence of companies which sell petroleum-based products, or to the lack of consensus for action within the governments themselves. All five of these factors apply to the American energy situation.

If the U.S. Congress were to somehow overcome its fear of incurring the displeasure of the Saudi rulers--perhaps after a decision in Riyadh to cut oil production by two million

barrels a day, to give one plausible¹⁷⁶ cause--the legislators might be angry and/or concerned enough to appropriate funds for part or all of the strategic petroleum reserve. Thus buffered against temporary supply disruptions, the U.S. could pursue its foreign policy objectives with far less fear of the Arab "oil weapon." Riyadh's influence in Washington would diminish, such that certain Saudi requests for advanced American arms could be painlessly refused if the sales were judged detrimental to American strategic interests.

In sum, playing "hard ball" along with Iraq could backfire on Riyadh. Excessive Saudi toughness in demonstrating the kingdom's commitment to the Palestinian cause could provide an effective catalyst for inducing the United States and, in time, its allies to accept the short-term sacrifices necessary to rid themselves of their acute dependence on Saudi oil. In the long run, it is the Saudis whose power and security would stand to suffer the most.

b. new U.S. openness toward Iraq--The United States and Iraq have not had formal diplomatic relations since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Baghdad's close ties with the Soviets, its extreme anti-Zionism, and its blatant (and often bloody) disregard for domestic human rights and international norms of conduct have kept America's interest in restoring relations with Iraq at a minimum. Several developments, however, have caused some U.S. policymakers to reconsider their official contempt for Iraq's radical Baathist regime.

Good point

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the replacement of the Shah by a violently anti-American group of revolutionaries in Iran have left U.S. leaders looking for ways to balance these setbacks to America's strategic position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in the Gulf. After National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski visited the Khyber Pass in early 1980 as a demonstration of American resolve to prevent further Soviet moves, he revealed the Carter administration's open-mindedness to the prospect of mending relations with Iraq. In April, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David D. Newsom announced that the United States was now prepared to resume diplomatic ties with Baghdad (Iraq has not responded).

There is an economic underpinning to the changing American attitude toward Iraq. The level of U.S. exports to Iraq in 1980 is over twenty-five times what it was in 1972. Significantly, the U.S. Government has begun to relax its prohibition on sales of military-related items to Baghdad. Although delivery was held up due to the Iraq-Iran war, General Electric has been officially allowed to sell gas-turbine engines to be put into Italian-made warships for Iraq.¹⁷⁷ A \$200 million sale of five Boeing jets to Iraqi Airlines was halted after President Carter, in compliance with a special provision of the Export Administration Act, designated Iraq as a haven for international terrorists; it is nevertheless interesting to note that the Commerce Department and the State Department had indicated a willingness to permit the sale.¹⁷⁸ It should therefore come

as no surprise if further defense-related sales to Iraq are approved in the future.

While perhaps detrimental to President Carter's human rights policy, courting Iraq's friendship--to the extent that it succeeds--can serve two constructive purposes for the U.S. within the Washington-Riyadh-Baghdad triangle. On the one hand, it may help to temper President Saddam Hussein's nearly exclusive emphasis on anti-Americanism in his "anti-superpower" machinations; and on the other hand, a lessening of the enmity between Washington and Baghdad would relieve the Saudi leaders of the diplomatic agony of having to aggrrieve one partner each time it consorts with the other. Since Riyadh's current drift is toward favoring Iraq at America's expense on Palestinian issues, both effects would be of some value to the United States. It remains to be seen, however, how deeply support for renewed ties with Iraq runs within the U.S. government, especially after Iraq's military aggression against Iran.

c. upgrading of U.S. military capabilities near the Gulf

i. reasons

Strategic setbacks in Iran and Afghanistan, rather than disagreements with the Saudis, are at the root of America's decision to create a network of bases and supply depots for use by U.S. forces in a Gulf crisis. Enlarged fears in Washington of another Arab-Israeli war may also be involved. But regardless of the causes, it is worth noting the probable

effects of a heightened U.S. regional military presence on the Saudi-U.S. relationship and the security interests of both countries.

ii. new initiatives

For several years, American naval vessels in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea have shipped principally out of the U.S. base at Diego Garcia, 2,500 miles southeast of the Gulf. Recent U.S. initiatives, however, have diversified and enlarged American logistical capabilities in the area.

Following the seizure of American hostages in Teheran on November 4, 1979, the U.S. dispatched two carrier task forces to the Arabian Sea. In March 1980, four amphibious warships with 1,800 marines were also sent to the Arabian Sea, and in early April, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown announced plans to preposition military supplies for a 12,000-man Marine Corps brigade in seven freighters at Diego Garcia. During the spring of 1980, American B-52 bombers conducted at least four reconnaissance missions to the area from Guam.¹⁷⁹

In early June, a basing-for-aid pact with Oman was announced. The Omani island of Masirah offers British-built port and airfield facilities, with the added advantage to both countries of being visually removed from critics of the agreement on the mainland. It is possible that a second port in northern Oman could also be used by the U.S. Navy if minesweeping operations became necessary in the Strait of Hormuz.¹⁸⁰

On June 27, 1980, the State Department announced an agreement

with the government of Kenya expanding American access to port facilities at Mombassa and Kenyan airfields as well.¹⁸¹ The U.S. Navy has long enjoyed permission to use Mombassa for servicing, refueling and shore leave. Under the new agreement, the U.S. will provide Kenya with approximately \$65 million in aid for one year, in return for which American forces will obtain unspecified "additional access" to Mombassa-- the interpretation of which, notwithstanding Kenya's nonaligned status, could entail the prepositioning of at least non-military supplies for American use in a Gulf crisis.¹⁸²

On August 22, 1980, the United States concluded an agreement with Somalia under which, according to a New York Times report, "American forces will have access to airfields and port facilities at Mogadishu in the Indian Ocean, at Berbera in the Gulf of Aden and possibly other locations." The same report lists the price to America as "at least \$151 million in military, economic and refugee assistance over a two-year period."¹⁸³ The Somali facilities at Berbera offer many advantages to the United States besides their proximity to the Gulf of Aden, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. There is a 13,500-foot runway and an excellent secure harbor with extensive docking facilities and fuel storage capacity. There is far less local maritime traffic in Berbera than in Mombassa or Omani ports.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, as Newsweek reports, "Somalia is more willing than Oman or Kenya to have the United States make practical, visible use of its facilities."¹⁸⁵

Less than a week after the accord with Somalia was signed, details of yet another arrangement for U.S. military access to the region's facilities became publicly known. The government of Egypt is to make its Red Sea port of Ras Benas available to the United States "for certain limited purposes." In the past, the U.S. has used Egypt's Qena airbase for missions by sophisticated reconnaissance planes; additionally, Egypt's air force has conducted joint exercises with the U.S. Air Force at Cairo West Air Base.¹⁸⁶

Ras Benas, however, is to be developed into a major base with a "first class" airfield capable of handling B-52s, new warehouses and fuel stores, and rebuilt piers--all financed by the United States; estimates for this project, including rental fees, run close to \$400 million. While the permanent stationing of U.S. troops at Ras Benas is not contemplated in this arrangement, American defense planners may well intend for this base to become the central staging ground for any Middle East missions undertaken by the 110,000-man Rapid Deployment Force.¹⁸⁷

iii. regional political repercussions

In return for its improved military capabilities, the United States must pay a political price. In Oman, Sultan Qabus has encountered vehement opposition to his introduction of a U.S. presence from several Arab states, principally Iraq. Soon before the U.S. and Somalia came to terms, neighboring Ethiopia requested the withdrawal of the American ambassador in Addis

Ababa. Many observers--including seven of the eight members of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa--have questioned whether the U.S., by supplying arms to Somalia, will be able to avoid becoming indirectly involved in Somalia's conflict against Soviet- and Cuban-backed forces in the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia, which is less than 150 miles from Berbera.¹⁸⁸ Somalia's President Mohammed Siad Barre was born in the Ogaden; his assurances to the U.S. State Department that American arms will not be used against Ethiopia are by no means universally trusted in Washington.¹⁸⁹

The American agreement with Kenya may yet encounter some African resistance, especially if stockpiles of American resupply materials are brought in for storage; in this regard it is worth noting that in July 1980, the Organization of African Unity went on record demanding that the U.S. vacate Diego Garcia. In Egypt, President Sadat's dauntless embrace of American interests reinforces the convictions of many Arab states who equate the Camp David "peace framework" with U.S. imperialism.

In short, America's moves to strengthen its military projection capabilities in the Gulf are highly unpopular and thus publicly unsupportable within the region's political arena, regardless of how various leaders may feel privately. It now becomes increasingly costly for any Gulf state to identify its interests with those of the United States.¹⁹⁰ The polarization between Israel and the Arab rejectionist states--

be they Soviet-supplied "steadfastness and confrontation front" states or members of the Iraq-led anti-superpower coalition--is intensified, leaving far less credible middle ground for Riyadh to comfortably occupy.

iv. impact on Saudi interests

The result is that Saudi Arabia is under mounting pressure from Iraq and other Arab states to disentangle itself from the United States. As any assessment of Saudi-U.S. economic and military interdependence (see above) will indicate, however, such an objective would be fairly unattainable in the short- or medium-term.

Moreover, the Saudis have no reason to desire an actual reduction in their mutual dependence with the United States, other than for transitory inter-Arab political convenience. While Saudi leaders can never say so publicly, they surely welcome America's improved intervention capabilities, since the kingdom's security against external attack ultimately depends upon perceptions of U.S. ability and political will to fight in the Gulf should the need arise.

It may appear that the Saudis are, so to speak, "having their cake and eating it too," by enjoying the security benefits of an enlarged U.S. military presence while reaping the political (and security) rewards of what amounts to a diplomatic anti-U.S. alliance with Iraq. Certainly, current Western dependence on Saudi oil is such that as long as the kingdom keeps the oil flowing, it can count on American protection

almost regardless of Riyadh's foreign policies. Thus unbound by political constraints, the Saudis are free to broaden their ties to demonstrate solidarity with Iraq and the pro-Palestinian Arab states; more than likely, the Saudi leaders believe that they have to do so to avoid damaging their standing in Arab and Islamic circles. But it should be pointed out that by virtually decoupling their political orientations from their deep-rooted relationship with the United States, the Saudis run the risk of compromising their security in subtle but potentially significant ways.

Arms procurement is one example of this. Following Iraq's example, the Saudis in mid-1979 arranged to purchase a \$1 billion Shahine air defense system from France; additionally, the French agreed to sell advanced AMX-30 tanks for three Saudi armored brigades, and to supply 450 military advisors to train new units inside the kingdom.¹⁹¹ In May 1980, the Saudis signed an agreement with France for naval equipment; French naval contracts with both Iraq and Saudi Arabia were said to total \$3.3 billion. Le Monde had earlier reported that France and Italy--Iraq's two favorite arms merchants of late--were competing for a substantial contract to sell Riyadh missile-equipped patrol boats and anti-submarine gunboats.¹⁹²

The advantages to the Saudis in diversifying their arms purchases away from Washington may include faster delivery, fewer restrictions, reduction of dependence upon a single supplier, warmer ties with Baghdad, and the regional political

rewards of appearing to reject American primacy in Saudi defense planning.

Yet the disadvantages are potentially greater: reduced ability to coordinate operations on a national scale, if parts are not interchangeable and spare parts and technicians must be segregated according to each nationality of weapon; and greatly increased difficulties in creating an indigenous pool of trained Saudi mechanics, who already suffer from serious cultural and educational handicaps in learning the English language and repairing American armaments without also having to learn to read French and Italian repair manuals while adapting to each country's mechanical idiosyncrasies. A third possible disadvantage would arise if the U.S. Army ever concluded that the Americans no longer held a uniquely close defense advisory relationship with the Saudis; in such a situation, the United States might limit the technical sophistication both of weapons sold to the Saudis and of information imparted through training missions.

For the time being, these considerations should pose no great problem, unless the Saudis begin to overlap their American weapons with similar French and Italian purchases on a large scale. But in wartime, the kingdom's defense-in-depth doctrine relies on the ability to pull troops from the border bases and then have them operate effectively with other units and equipment based throughout Saudi Arabia. It is only sensible that arms procurement and training programs ought to be kept

as simple and consistent as possible. Diversifying their arms purchases may erode the effectiveness--and hence the credibility--of the Saudis' deterrent against external attack.

Other manifestations of broadened Saudi policy latitude might include more forceful opposition by Riyadh to the Camp David peace process (particularly if the rival European negotiating effort were to gain further momentum), and a more tolerant disposition toward the Soviet Union. In the first instance, Riyadh would delight many Arab states by lending its prestige and oil power to a more concerted rejection of the U.S.-Israel-Egypt peace process. But by so doing, the kingdom would be forfeiting any pretension of moderation on the issue, and the risk of a preemptive Israeli air strike against Saudi Arabia would increase. The Saudis would also be forcing the balance of support in Washington toward Israel's point of view on questions of security assistance to Riyadh; the U.S. Congress would be far less likely to approve the sale of F-15 accessories to Saudi Arabia, to use the most current example. Prospects for restoring relations with Egypt--the Arab country whose long-range interests most closely align with Saudi Arabia's--would also be set back considerably.

Regarding the latter prospect, a calmer Saudi attitude toward Soviet influence in the area, here again Riyadh may face conflicting pressures. In the wake of Syria's merger with Libya, if the new entity's leadership signs a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Moscow (a move rumored

to have been planned by Syria's President Assad before Qaddafi proposed the merger), the most radical of the Arab countries-- Syria/Libya, Algeria, the PDRY, and (a stateless entity) the PLO--will enjoy unprecedented unity and Soviet support. Iraq, whose ruling Baathist regime is at this stage quite hostile to Assad's rival Baathist faction in Syria, may react negatively toward the Soviet Union's closeness with Assad; on the other hand, since Iraq will be hosting the 1982 conference of the nonaligned nations, President Saddam Hussein may alternatively pursue an openly pro-Soviet line in hopes of repeating the successful example of Fidel Castro, host of the last non-aligned conference in 1979.

Insofar as relations with Moscow are involved, Riyadh's identification with the radical Arabs and Iraq may come into conflict with Saudi requirements as leader of the Islamic countries. In the Iraq-Iran war, for example, Riyadh's support for Baghdad had to be tempered with distress at the spectacle of Muslims fighting each other. To give another example, under no circumstances could the Saudis retract their support for the Muslims in Eritrea, who are fighting against Soviet-backed Cuban and Ethiopian troops.

Under combined Arab pressure, however, the Saudis may find it politically convenient to soften their opposition to the Soviet advisory presence in the Yemens, or to Soviet cultural and diplomatic contacts within the Gulf sheikhdoms. Allowing Moscow to retain and expand cultural footholds near the Gulf

may be innocuous in the short term, but over time it could erode the potential for rallying Arab sentiment against the Soviets should Saudi Arabia one day find itself strategically outmaneuvered by Moscow.

In all of these examples of potential or actual Saudi divergence from American policy goals, there is necessarily an element of speculation. What they illustrate, however, is that the 38-year-old U.S.-Saudi security relationship is not wholly separable from the day-to-day global political arena, and therefore that the "cards played" and "bridges burned" in Riyadh's quest for regional prestige must be viewed in terms of their impact on the forces which threaten the Saudi kingdom and on the kingdom's capabilities to defend against them.

By this measure, the Saudis would be wise to limit their participation in the Iraqi strategy to primarily symbolic acts, lest they destroy Western political and economic cohesion, press Israel into diplomatically-isolated bellicosity, overinflate Saddam Hussein's ego, and offer the Soviets an opportunity to ride the crest of pan-Arab solidarity against Israel, all the while undercutting their own defense development. Whether the Saudis wish to recognize it or not, their interdependence with the United States will remain a fact of political life--and strategic health--for many years to come.

C. Europe

More than the U.S. or the U.S.S.R., the countries of Western Europe are dependent upon secure supplies of petroleum from the Gulf; whereas only 16 percent of America's oil comes from the Gulf, the figure for Europe is 70 percent.¹⁹³ Europe's economies have shown themselves to be more susceptible to oil-related economic pressures than have the American and Soviet economies.¹⁹⁴

Arab economic leverage over Europe has translated into some significant political rewards, particularly in the aftermath of the March 1979 Egypt-Israel treaty. One such benefit is that Europe has been effectively drawn away from the position of its American ally on the Palestinian issue, to the point of sponsoring a rival peace initiative. Another--perhaps a by-product of this European political "neutrality"--is that Europe has recently emerged as a preferred non-threatening alternative source of sophisticated armaments, thus enabling Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and others to continue to upgrade their military arsenals without compromising their regional "anti-superpower" objectives.

1. The European Peace Initiative

Since July 1979, when PLO chief Yasser Arafat was invited to participate in discussions with Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kriesky and Swedish Premier Olaf Palme, many European countries have recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Arafat has since been officially

hosted in Spain, Italy, Belgium and France; Germany's Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher and former Chancellor Willy Brandt have also met with him, although not in an official capacity.

Europe's dealings with Arafat have led to a series of diplomatic initiatives aimed at including the PLO in future peace discussions with Israel. In contrast, the United States has not officially recognized the PLO; by doing so, any American administration would suffer considerable political damage at the hands of Israel's powerful supporters within the U.S. electorate. Despite his huge popularity among black voters, America's U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young was dismissed by the President after he circumvented this non-recognition policy in August 1979.

And
lied
about it.

Thus on the Palestinian issue, Europe has parted ways with the U.S.-sponsored Camp David "comprehensive peace" approach. In June 1980, the European heads of state held a summit in Venice. Their joint communiqué, the so-called Venice Declaration, endorsed Palestinian self-determination as well as Israel's right to security. Although neither Israel nor the PLO approved of this document, the EEC set out to fashion a new role for itself as mediator. In August 1980 Gaston Thorn, president of the European Council (the executive body of the Common Market), conducted a fact-finding mission to Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan to gauge local attitudes toward the prospect of a European peace initiative in the Middle East.

Thorn was also scheduled to visit Israeli leaders, but was rebuffed at the last moment.

One leader who voiced support for the European effort was Jordan's King Hussein,¹⁹⁵ a very central figure in the dispute who had earlier criticized the United States for neglecting to consult him about Jordan's role during President Carter's Camp David negotiations with Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin.¹⁹⁶ King Hussein has a number of reasons for rejecting the Camp David framework. One is money: Jordan's economic lifeline is an annual \$1 billion subsidy, granted by oil-rich Arab rejectionists after the March 1979 anti-Camp David summit in Baghdad. This aid amounts to four times the American sum it replaced.¹⁹⁷ Another factor is the predominance of Palestinians in Jordan, including 720,000 Palestinian Arabs in the occupied West Bank, for whom no direct representation was envisaged in the Camp David process. King Hussein is said to believe that opposing the PLO would be the single most dangerous act for his own survival as a monarch.¹⁹⁸ Thirdly, there is Hussein's powerful desire to avoid the stigma of becoming the one king in a centuries-long dynasty of Hashemite kings to lose Jerusalem.

Europe's governments have sided with King Hussein, both in supporting PLO participation in the peace process and in condemning Israel's annexation of Jerusalem. Conversely, on both issues the United States has continued to favor (or at least not oppose) Israel's positions. Thus the emergence of rival peace plans between allies.

The Saudis have played a key role in this process. It was reportedly Crown Prince Fahd's urgings which led Arafat to moderate his rhetoric and court European diplomatic acceptance of the PLO in mid-1979.¹⁹⁹ During the autumn of 1979, Saudi Arabia concluded bilateral oil agreements with several Western European governments, "with the aim," reported the New York Times, "of nudging the Common Market closer to open support of the Palestinian cause."²⁰⁰ As noted above, Riyadh's quiet diplomacy gave way in August 1980 to blunt ultimatums on the Jerusalem issue, which were issued just as the Common Market's Mr. Thorn was visiting the Arab world; no doubt the EEC got the message.

Europe has much to lose by displeasing the Arab oil exporters; and unlike the geopolitically-competitive U.S. and U.S.S.R., Europe is not seen as harboring intrusive motives in assisting the PLO's diplomatic ascent--only the avoidance of economic loss. Riyadh, like Jordan, has found the Camp David accords unsupportable, and has enlisted Europe in the search for a negotiation process which suitably represents Palestinians throughout the Middle East and attempts to suspend further Israeli settlement and annexation of the occupied territories, pending negotiated agreement on their ultimate status.

2. The "No Strings" Alternative--European Arms

In August 1979, Jordan asked the United States to sell it advanced combat aircraft to augment its less-sophisticated American F-5s, plus 300 M-60 tanks. Washington refused to sell the more advanced planes, and stipulated that when the M-60s

were delivered, 300 old tanks would have to be scrapped to preserve Jordan's aggregate level of armor. The Jordanians bought 36 French Mirage F-1s and 300 British Chieftan tanks instead.

France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland have stepped in to fill Arab orders which at one time would probably have been taken by the United States.²⁰¹ One reason is President Carter's Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, embodied in a May 1977 document called Presidential Directive 13. PD-13 provides for an annual arms sales ceiling (to be reduced each year) and six new qualitative controls. Emphasizing a policy of restraint, the document states that "the United States will henceforth view arms transfers as an exceptional foreign policy implement,...and..., the burden of persuasion will be on those who favor a particular arms sale, rather than those who oppose it."²⁰² In 1980 this U.S. policy has taken an "about-face," according to Richard K. Betts, who writes that, "Arms sales are again normal rather than exceptional."²⁰³ The fact remains, however, that official U.S. reticence, however temporary, in providing arms to non-allies has facilitated a new windfall for European merchants.

Arms sales to oil-wealthy Arab countries benefit European countries in a number of ways: by helping to stabilize the lopsided balance of trade between oil importers and exporters; by allowing European arms industries to undertake weapons development projects on a much larger scale than would be possible

if indigenous European armies were the sole clients; and by giving countries with successful military industries a valuable boost to their strategic self-sufficiency. "For France," writes André Gunder Frank, "armaments production has become the number one export industry, without which the already weak French economy would suffer the gravest of crises."²⁰⁴ According to Betts, "arms sales to LDCs are proportionately much more important to the Europeans [than to the United States and the Soviet Union]."²⁰⁵

European governments have therefore welcomed arms sales to Middle East countries. France and Iraq have developed a special "oil-for-arms" relationship which includes the transfer of sensitive nuclear reactor technology.²⁰⁶ As noted in the U.S. section above, Saudi Arabia's growing relationship with Iraq has brought Riyadh together with French and Italian weapons contractors. Since America's increasing regional military presence and Washington's continued support of Israel have alienated rejectionist Arab countries from the United States, Europe is becoming the much preferred arms source.

* * * * *

To conclude, the 1980s have ushered in a new equation of counterbalanced higher American and Soviet military capabilities in the Gulf. In response, the region's countries have sounded pan-Islamic and pan-Arab calls for independence from superpower

meddling, and employed economic "carrots" and "sticks" to make Europe their buffer against the two superpowers. Since Eastern and Western energy needs ensure that the Gulf's petroleum will figure prominently in geostrategic rivalries for many years to come, it is not at all clear that Europe's new roles as OPEC's diplomatic lever and weapons supplier will deter either the U.S.S.R. from seeking improved access to the Gulf's oil, or the U.S. from securing its own vital interests against Soviet interdiction.

Indeed, the convenient marriage of Europe and the moderate Arab rejectionists may instead produce unintended and unwanted effects for both parties. As the delineation between the relatively moderate Arab coalition of Iraq-Saudi Arabia-Gulf sheikhdoms-Jordan and the more radical Libya/Syria-PDRY-Algeria group seems to be sharpening, Moscow could tacitly concede Europe's advantage with the former group and embrace the radical Arabs much more brazenly.²⁰⁷ The U.S., meanwhile, would feel compelled to counter any major increases in Soviet capabilities near the Gulf; lacking the blessings and cooperation of the Baghdad-led "anti-superpower" states in the Gulf, Washington's solutions (the Nixon Doctrine notwithstanding) would have to rely upon America's own power projection capabilities in the Gulf--exactly what the moderate Arabs say they wish to avoid.

Europe, by dooming the U.S. arms transfer restraint policy, undermining the Camp David peace process, and making it feasible

IV. CONCLUSION--THE QUEST FOR SECURITY

If the task of assessing the range of threats confronting the Saudi royal leaders is a complicated one, the search for solutions is even more challenging, and to some extent frustrating. What would appear to be optimal measures to counter one threat often invite an unacceptable increment of vulnerability to a different threat. How Riyadh chooses to manage these tradeoffs will very likely determine the longevity of the al Saud regime.

A. The Core Dilemma--Internal Control or External Strength?

On New Year's Day, 1980, the official Saudi press agency announced that King Khalid had requested and received the resignations of the Chief of Staff, the Commander of the Public Security Forces, the Commander of the Air Force, and several other top officials in the Ministry of Defense and Aviation.²⁰⁹ The king's dissatisfaction was understandable, given the poor performance of the armed forces in either forestalling or quelling the Mecca uprising; news of significant defections among Bedouin guardsmen must have been very disconcerting to Khalid. But the attitude--displayed for decades by monarchs throughout the Gulf²¹⁰--that top bureaucratic and security posts are to be used as "plums", offered or withdrawn as a

measure of the king's pleasure, is unhealthy. Saudi Arabia lacks a credible fighting force, and the king's preoccupation with keeping his regime's potential domestic rivals fragmented and powerless only perpetuates the following military drawbacks:

- ** The al Saud clan's near-monopoly control over the leadership of the armed forces reinforces the low level of technical expertise and precludes the adoption of a merit system throughout the ranks.
- ** The king's not infrequent reshuffling of military leaders has prevented the various defense branches from establishing an effective joint staff operation; this has impeded development of the institutional autonomy and continuity necessary to foster greater efficiency and esprit de corps. The serious recruitment problems and the high AWOL rates in all branches²¹¹ are due in part to this deficiency.
- ** The al Saud clan's total control over military ammunition and fuel makes the army excessively vulnerable to a kidnapping of the king or some such paralyzing act of blackmail. Since the country's military and economic power centers are so well dispersed, a synchronized coup attempt would otherwise be much less feasible.
- ** The total lack of systems coordination between the National Guard and the armed forces--evidenced by separate arms procurement policies and separate (but not redundant) C³--render combined arms operations ineffective, as shown at Mecca in 1979. With only 71,000 men under arms in both organizations,²¹² this forced separation underutilizes the country's scarce manpower.
- ** Precautionary refusal to deploy the armed forces anywhere near the population centers, royal leaders, or Al Hasa

oilfields limits their deterrent value against external attack on eastern targets. Failure to train the National Guard, who must defend these key locations, in front-line combat further contributes to this vulnerability, since the Saudi army does not presently have the capability to airlift its tanks in an emergency--only APCs. (There is now talk of an "industrial antisabotage force" of at least 1,000 men to guard the oilfields.²¹³)

Conversely, giving the armed forces a freer hand to develop and interact might prove disastrous for the royal family. A coup was attempted in 1969 by air force officers; a decade later, in mid-summer 1979, there were unconfirmed reports of another coup attempt by the air force's northern regional command, stationed just seventeen miles north of Riyadh at the Sharja base.²¹⁴ It may be, therefore, that the royal family's safeguards against an internal military challenge will continue to be considered a necessary evil, however much they sap the defense establishment's vitality.

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the
Air Force.*

If so, it will be unrealistic to expect Saudi Arabia's indigenous military establishment to significantly improve its capabilities as foreign advisors and sophisticated technologies are introduced in future years; if anything, the Saudi forces will remain unable to absorb high-quality imported weapons and training assistance. A few years ago, this sad truth might not have mattered as much to Saudi Arabia or its neighbors near and far. But with superpower forces steadily closing in on the Gulf, Iraq and Iran blowing up each other's oil installations and threatening the Strait of Hormuz, and

a Saudi air war with Israel far more thinkable in 1980 than ever before, the question of Saudi Arabia's defensive capabilities is a matter of serious consequence to friend and foe alike.

In Riyadh, this means that the kingdom would do well to clarify its security doctrine. The bungled Mecca operation stripped the Saudis of any false pretensions of improved operational abilities. If the Saudi armed forces are to remain pathologically inept, who will guarantee the kingdom's territorial integrity? The United States? Iraq? It is another fundamental problem lacking an obvious solution.

B. The Deterrence Dilemma--What Role for the United States?

In happier years--when international issues separating Riyadh and Washington could be more comfortably side-stepped--it was understood that America's "special" defense relationship with Saudi Arabia included protection against external aggression. "The Saudis are...erecting a gigantic 'trip wire'." wrote Louis Turner and James Bedore in early 1978, "because Western countries are so involved with both Saudi defenses and Saudi oil that any attack on the kingdom would inevitably run such a chance of provoking Western retaliation that potential aggressors will think twice." This strategy was believed sufficient to deter even Israel, who "must seriously appreciate the tremendous adverse impact that the casualties amongst Western technicians would have on the United States."²¹⁵

Western technicians still inhabit Saudi military installations, and the trip wire logic continues to be as valid as it ever was; but as previous sections have explained, America's close security ties to the Saudis are no longer compatible with Riyadh's other political alignments, particularly among Islamic nations, Arab rejectionists generally, and Iraq specifically. How simple things would be if the Saudis could steer clear of the Arab-Israeli dispute--but they cannot.

There are legions of organized nationalistic Palestinians throughout the Gulf who could raise havoc if the monarchies failed to lend them political support. There is the issue of Jerusalem, on which the Saudi royal family could no sooner remain neutral than renounce the Islamic faith. And finally, there is the emergence of a European alternative to the Camp David peace process, ^{" " " "} a balanced and moderate approach which promises at the very least to keep Riyadh and Washington at odds in the United Nations and other international fora on issues pertaining to Israel.

*Some
what
would
doubt
this ?*

This political parting of ways, coinciding with Western strategic reversals in Iran and Afghanistan, has made it easier for leaders in the United States to agree on the necessity of undertaking self-protective military and economic measures. Yet because these unpopular acts only widen the split between the U.S. and much of the Arab world, Riyadh must continually downplay its American ties. Thus, due to circumstances which neither party can control or ignore, the U.S.-

Saudi bilateral estrangement seems to be feeding upon itself.

The day that America's energy policies finally succeed in terminating the vital oil dependency which has bound the U.S. to Saudi Arabia for decades, Washington's concern for the royal family's political survival is certain to diminish. Perhaps in preparation for this--but more probably in response to the current opportunities and constraints involved in pan-Arab and pan-Islamic unity politics--the Saudis appear to be exploring new security initiatives which do not include U.S. participation at all:

- ** A Gulf security alliance, combining Iraq, Saudi Arabia and most or all of the sheikhdoms. This prospect (discussed in the Iraq section, above) makes good sense for all parties involved, including the U.S. Washington's goal should be to try to mitigate Saddam Hussein's anti-Americanism, so as to permit Riyadh to sustain good relations with both the U.S. and Iraq.

- ** An increasingly diversified arms purchasing policy, giving Europe new business which earlier might have gone to the U.S. This trend (see U.S. and Europe sections, above), if pursued on a major scale, could hurt the Saudis militarily in several ways, including:
 - reduced interoperability of systems
 - complication of already-onerous technical skill requirements
 - multiplied requirements for acquisition and inventory of spare parts
 - reduced willingness of U.S. to share more sophisticated technologies
 - pressure from other Arab states on Saudis to fund advanced European weapons for them as well since, unlike American arms transfers, the European sales are comparatively free of restrictions governing use or technology-sharing with third parties

** Use of neighboring states' troops as proxies to compensate for deficient Saudi manpower. Pakistan, which has agreed to provide military engineers and support personnel to the kingdom, is also said to have arranged the stationing of an army division, or 10,000 Pakistani soldiers, in Saudi Arabia.²¹⁶ In return, Riyadh is to provide General Zia's regime with military and economic assistance estimated at anywhere from \$1 billion to \$12.5 billion. Writes the Economist, "Both are...haunted by justified fears of internal dissidence. It makes sense that they should turn discreetly to one another, rather than to an outside power."²¹⁷ Local trading of financial assets for military assets is not unheard of in the Gulf. Egyptian troops have been "rented" by Oman, while Jordanian army troops and advisors are on loan to North Yemen.²¹⁸

Publicly dissociating Saudi security planning from U.S. "imperialism" and seeking regional security solutions instead will win Riyadh great popularity and support in the Arab world. As the Saudis have undoubtedly calculated, U.S. advisors in the kingdom will continue to serve as a trip wire deterrent, and American sea-based forces at nearby ports (see U.S. section, above) will faithfully stand guard in case the kingdom should be threatened and require U.S. help. Thus the royal family can still afford to keep its own armed forces impotent as a precaution against a military coup in Riyadh.

The arrangement seems militarily adequate and politically very convenient for the Saudi leaders, given the aforementioned dilemmas. But, convenient though it may appear, this security scheme is seriously flawed. In terms of capabilities, it rests upon:

- perpetuation of indigenous military weakness
- risk of jeopardizing the congressional support, sophistication of training and arms transferred, and overall program coherence which have been the by-products of the Saudis' "special" defense relationship with the U.S. in past years
- new reliance on untested allies (such as Iraq) with potentially dangerous regional enemies of their own (such as Iran), and on crack proxy troops (Pakistanis and Jordanians) whose loyalties to the al Saud clan cannot be assured in an era of secret cells of disaffected National Guard officers and Air Force coup attempts
- ultimate reliance on an untested regional U.S. military presence²¹⁹ which, because of its very high political and dollar costs, may last only long enough for America to "de-vitalize" its interests in the Gulf, assuming that the host governments do not withdraw their basing privileges first

Thus the Saudis' most effective (and hence most essential) deterrent--American power projection--is also the most distant and, in the long term, the least dependable, while Saudi defensive assets are progressively less capable the closer one is to the highest value targets in the eastern province.

An even more serious flaw in this patchwork formula for deterrence is that it actually degrades Saudi security against the kingdom's two greatest external threats, namely the U.S.S.R. and Israel.

The U.S.S.R. argument rests on the following points:

- ** (The key assumption is that the Soviet Union's main objective is to acquire a degree of control over the flow of Saudi oil. The remaining points derive their significance from this premise.)
- ** Any erosion of U.S. primacy in Saudi defense planning,

especially if accompanied by a reduction of American dependence on Saudi oil supplies, will gradually undermine the Kremlin's treatment of Saudi Arabia as part of America's geopolitical sphere of influence; in this sense, "neutrality" for the Saudis will mean vulnerability to the Soviet Union.

- ** Saudi Arabia's new friendship with Iraq is causing Riyadh to display a more even-handed approach to both superpowers, making it politically difficult for the Saudis to contest Soviet footholds as rabidly as in the past.
- ** Increased polarization between the Camp David countries and almost everyone else in the Middle East may give Moscow new opportunities to identify closely with the movement for Arab unity. Certainly the radical Arab rejectionists are already strongly tied to the Soviets; but the moderates--Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, "moderate" PLO factions, and their EEC peace initiative partners--could also warm up to Moscow, particularly if the Arab radicals and moderates manage to subordinate their present differences on the Palestine issue, and if the U.S. suffers further alienation with both groups by continuing its commitment to the Camp David peace process.

For the time being at least, the Saudis can count on a strong U.S. commitment to deter Soviet aggression; since it is also difficult to envisage a future generation of American leaders remaining indifferent to a Soviet lunge toward the oilfields--even if U.S. vital interests are no longer at stake--the Saudi leaders are probably taking American protection somewhat for granted. The imprudence of Riyadh's security

policy toward Moscow, therefore, lies not so much in the kingdom's present or future protection against a Soviet attack as in its indirect accommodation of the U.S.S.R.'s own long-term tactics and designs.

The Israeli threat argument is far less subtle and much more immediate. It suggests that Saudi Arabia's regional political role, its changing relationship with the United States, and its nominal warfighting doctrine may all be a recipe for disaster. On this matter as on almost no other, the Saudi rulers must make some very clear and careful policy choices.

C. The Doctrinal Dilemma--How to Avoid Provoking an Israeli Attack?

The Saudis' objective is to possess sufficient defensive capabilities to make any prospective incursion seem unacceptably expensive to the adversary. Should this deterrent fail, the strategy is to blunt enemy attacks until "allied" assistance arrives. The kingdom's armed forces are deployed with these defensive purposes in mind.

The army is stationed far from the main population centers and oilfields, mostly along the border areas. Five new colossal military "cities", planned for completion in 1985, will be able to accommodate 150 aircraft and 130,000 personnel each. They will constitute a network designed to facilitate rapid troop redeployments, stretching from King Khalid Military City (which one journalist has called "perhaps the biggest and most expensive defense construction project on earth"²²⁰) at Qaysumah

near the Iraqi border, down to a new base at Khamis Mushait near the Yemeni border.²²¹

The Saudi Navy suffers from the lack of an indigenous maritime tradition. Recruitment problems are severe, and the organization has always been very small, with no more than 1,500 men. Now, however, major naval facilities are under construction at Jidda on the Red Sea and at Jubail on the Gulf, to augment the bases at Ras Tanura, Damman and Yenbo. The Saudis are stepping up their acquisitions of new vessels, weapons and naval communications systems from the U.S., France and Italy.

For all of the reasons enumerated in this chapter, however, neither the army nor the navy is capable of mounting a credible defense of the kingdom's high-value targets, most of which are in the eastern province. The longitudinal "corridor" of key areas--Mecca/Medina/Jidda, Riyadh and environs, and the Dhahran/Damman oil region--are defended by the Saudi Air Force, which combines the armed forces' most competent and educated personnel with the kingdom's most advanced weaponry. What one analyst has termed "a nonoffensive oriented air force" designates its 110 limited-range F-5E combat aircraft for ground support; the 45 F-15C fighters (the other 15 are trainers) were purchased for air defense, to be supplemented by fixed and mobile SAMs.²²²

The problem is this: despite drastic new measures such as the institution of a compulsory nation-wide draft, the con-

struction of massive training facilities at King Abdulaziz Military Academy near Riyadh, and the importation of foreign proxy troops, there are simply no effective short-term solutions to the indigenous Saudi manpower shortage. While the manpower-deficient Israelis have been extremely successful in substituting high-technology weaponry for troop strength, the Saudis are so critically deficient in skilled personnel that they could not even operate a second complement of 60 F-15s were they to acquire it, unless they brought in foreign pilots and mechanics.²²³

The Israeli are not manpower deficient in the same sense of J.A. as in the effort in levels of education & skills & weaponry.

Given these rather unpromising circumstances, the challenge for Riyadh has been to find new ways of further improving the kingdom's indigenous air defense capabilities. The Saudis appear to have arrived at two solutions, one of which is to acquire more SAMs, both fixed and mobile; the Saudis have invested in the French Shahine system, the British Rapier and the American Improved Hawk. The other solution (discussed in the section on Israel, above) is to upgrade the range and payload of the 45 F-15 Eagle fighters already purchased by Saudi Arabia. This step, which would measurably improve the Saudi deterrent on paper, could in reality place the kingdom in great jeopardy by suddenly confronting Israel with an ultra-sophisticated deep-penetration attack capability.

Not so.

The U.S. Government is presently deciding whether or not to sell Riyadh the conformal fuel pods and multiple ejection racks it has requested for its F-15s. In arriving at a decision,

American leaders will need to examine a host of likely consequences of either granting or refusing the sale. In the process, the security interests of Saudi Arabia, Israel, and ultimately the United States will be considered; and the ways in which these converge--and diverge--will become clearer to all. It is therefore a landmark decision.

1. U.S. Interests and the F-15 Accessories Request: To Sell....

Granting the Saudi request would advance American interests in the following ways:

** It would enable the Saudis to cover the Strait of Hormuz from their Dhahran airbase. This is the most compelling reason for approving the sale.

→ from what threat?

** Upgraded F-15s in Khamis Mushait would greatly improve the Saudis' deterrent against the growing Soviet-led threat in the PDRY and Ethiopia. Most significantly, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait would now fall within their combat radius.

but what threat? AI attack?

** It would contribute to American primacy in Saudi defense planning for the next several years. For many reasons already given, this would benefit the Saudis no less than the U.S.

** The increase in combat capabilities would be likely to enhance the prestige of the Saudi Air Force, attracting greater numbers of educated personnel into the service.

? Surely it's more complicated.

** The United States would boost its standing among the moderate Arab and Islamic countries. This would help to counter the ostracism suffered by the U.S. due to Camp David's growing unpopularity; it would likewise lessen the perception that Washington has split with Europe on Arab issues. It might help America to reclaim a greater share of the OAPEC arms trade, much of which

Do you think selling Saudi arms would hurt our standing in Jordan & Iran & Egypt & Saudi?

has recently shifted to Europe. Additionally, long-term Soviet ingratiating with the Arab world would suffer a setback to whatever extent the aforementioned developments materialized.

Among the potentially adverse effects on U.S. interests from the sale are the following:

For the Saudis don't really see F-15s as a threat - a threat to them

- ** Israel, perceiving a serious new Arab threat, would be tempted to stage a preemptive attack on Saudi Arabia in a crisis. Since the Israelis currently enjoy a greater margin of military superiority over their potential Arab adversaries than they did in 1973, the last thing that the Saudis want is a war with Israel.
- ** For the first time, the Saudis would possess a significant offensive military capability, able to be projected far beyond the kingdom's borders. The Saudi armed forces "nonoffensive" doctrine would therefore come into question throughout the region.
- ** It would feed the radical Arabs' zeal for further Saudi militancy, as did the original F-15 acquisition. Already the Saudis are considered a "front-line" state for the next war with Israel, by Arabs and Israelis alike. (The F-15s are not to be delivered, however, until January 1982 at the earliest, with the final deliveries to be made in mid-1984, by McDonnell Douglas .)
- ** Since the U.S. Government, by granting the request, would be violating an explicit pledge (In May 1978, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown said that the U.S. did "not... intend to sell any other systems or armaments that would increase the range or enhance the ground attack capability of the F-15"²²⁴), the trustworthiness of all such pledges would suffer, regardless of the changed circumstances (Afghanistan) cited as an explanation for this particular

See you have significant

reversal of policy. Israel's faith in America's word would be damaged, and the precedent could undermine future congressional support for similar arms transfer arrangements where the United States shares strategic interests with each of two mutually adversarial countries.

** It might encourage arrogant perceptions among Saudi leaders, notably Defense Minister Prince Sultan, that Washington dares not refuse Riyadh any weapons requests.

2. ...Or Not to Sell

Each of the above advantages and disadvantages would be negated, and some reversed, if Washington refused to grant the sale of F-15 accessories to Saudi Arabia. Israel's fierce opposition to the sale must weigh very heavily in the American decision. At the same time, however, if indeed Riyadh considers this request to be a "test case" of U.S.-Saudi relations, the consequences of a refusal could be equally serious for U.S. political and economic interests.

Is there a safe route of passage for U.S. policy between the Scylla- and Charybdis-like perils accompanying either approval or refusal, or have the Saudis finally asked for too much, pushing the United States into a costly choice between the interests of two of its most valued strategic partners?

3. Compromise: A Conditional Sale

Pro-Israeli sentiment in Washington may well prevail when the Saudi request is decided upon. But should post-Iran/Afghanistan concerns over Saudi military weakness and heightened

threats to the Strait of Hormuz incline the Congress to favor approval of the sale, the legislators may wish to consider attaching certain conditions, so as to minimize Israel's apprehensions:

** a basing scheme which does not threaten Israel. When the Saudi government first purchased the F-15s, it pledged not to base them at the new Tabuq airfield, 125 miles southeast of Israel's southernmost tip.²²⁵ Two other Saudi bases near Israel, Turayf and Gurayet, are not presently capable of handling the F-15s.

Nor does Riyadh plan to base the planes close to Israel. Saudi Arabia's west-to-east "corridor" will be covered from Taif (near Mecca/Medina/Jidda), perhaps Riyadh, and Dhahran, while other F-15s will guard the PDRY border from Khamis Mushait. (Iraq's border is not closely covered under this arrangement.)

Despite the fact that increasing the combat radius of the F-15s would enable them to reach new "legitimate" targets from these bases, there ought to be a guarantee that the Saudi leaders are not also striving for a capability to threaten Israel. Reliable verification of such things as basing, flight routes, and weapons payload of the F-15s could be conducted by the U.S. Military Mission in Saudi Arabia.

** an explicit doctrinal renunciation of offensive military orientation. The United States wants to see Saudi Arabia's defensive capabilities upgraded; it does not want to see Israel's security degraded. Since Riyadh has also mentioned its interest in obtaining KC-135 tankers for midair refueling of the F-15s, airborne warning and control aircraft (AWACs) to direct the F-15s in combat, and AIM-9L advanced air-to-air missiles to be deployed on the F-15s, it is possible to draw the conclusion

that the Saudis are seeking the capability to undertake long-range missions and to effectively penetrate hostile air space.

Midair refueling is unnecessary for the task of protecting the Jidda to Dhahran air corridor; and while AWACs, with a reported detection range of 250-350 miles, would be useful in sophisticated border reconnaissance of incoming threats, they are also quite indispensable for any contemplated incursions into Israel's air space. Reliance on fixed ground radar, although perhaps requiring many Western technicians to operate, would avoid this provocation of Israel. Alternatively, since Riyadh turned to Washington for AWACs when the Iraq-Iran war erupted, the Saudis might be amenable to keeping a fully U.S.-operated AWACs operation of its own on a permanent basis. (Regarding the AIM-9L, a defensive intercept missile, this is a sensible choice for air defense roles in the kingdom.)

The Saudis must make clear their nonaggressive intentions in seeking greater attack capabilities for their F-15s. The first step should be a reiteration of their nonoffensive doctrine, continuing to base their deterrent on the ability to effectively punish external aggressors against the kingdom. Any prospective improvements in their capabilities which exceed the reasonable requirements of this goal should not receive American support. The last thing that the U.S. needs is an adventurist Saudi Air Force with no military strength at home to cover for its misdeeds.

** an enhanced role for U.S. advisors. Although post-Vietnam American laws have prohibited the U.S. training mission from advising the Saudis on their overall tactics and organization, there are several good reasons for seeking an enhanced U.S. advisory role with the Saudi armed

forces. First, American influence would help to achieve the greatest improvements in Saudi defense with the least provocation of Israel. Secondly, Israeli confidence would be bolstered by a stronger U.S. input in Saudi defense planning. And thirdly, a larger and/or more senior official advisory presence would strengthen the trip wire deterrent to an Israeli strike on the F-15 airbases. In this regard, the recent Saudi rush request to Washington for the loan of AWACs, which the U.S. promptly answered with four planes and 300 American technicians, is a positive development.

These conditions might provide no comfort to Israelis, and they could be unpalatable to Saudis. But the United States, with so much to lose from either an outright acceptance or rejection of the F-15 accessories request, must be primarily concerned with political damage limitation. By asserting American interests in a conditional approval of the sale, Washington would be placing the onus of acceptance or rejection in Riyadh's lap. The U.S. could then continue to profess sympathy for the legitimate security needs of both Israel and Saudi Arabia, whatever the outcome of the request.

* * * * *

Saudi Arabia is a very weak country with a powerful asset--money. Rial diplomacy has been skillfully employed to oppose Soviet encroachment in the Middle East, to support forces for moderation in the Palestinian movement, to promote harmony and unity among Islamic countries, to protect Saudi

economic interests, and to help settle some thorny disputes.²²⁶ After years of using economic power as a "carrot", Riyadh has shown a new willingness in 1980 to brandish it as a "stick": first after Israel formally annexed Jerusalem in July; and then after the PLO was denied observer status prior to the annual IMF/World Bank meeting in September. So long as the royal family reigns in Riyadh, the Al Hasa oil wealth will continue to serve these causes.

But how long will that be? The House of Saud rests on old values in a time of radical political, economic and social change in the Gulf. Oil, which has boosted the Saudi monarchy to unprecedented heights of international prestige and influence, has also made the kingdom a principal target for military contingency plans in Moscow, Washington, Jerusalem, Aden, Teheran, and who knows how many other foreign capitals. It is only prudent for American leaders to anticipate the possibility of a change of regime, by foreign takeover, military coup, fundamentalist revolt or democratic evolution.

If the United States can reduce the vulnerability of its own interests to the consequences of an unfavorable change in Riyadh, it will enjoy greater flexibility to advance its interests in the day-to-day realm of conducting U.S. policy toward the Middle East. In this sense, American energy autonomy, by producing policy strength, would give new confidence to our friends in the region and thereby improve the chances that the process and the direction of change will be favorable.

FOOTNOTES

1. New York Times, 26 October 1979, p. A 2.
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3. See "Saudis Pressing Industrial Plan On a Vast Scale," by Youssef M. Ibrahim, New York Times, 7 March 1980, pp. A 1, D 13.
4. Richard M. Preece, "The Future Role of Saudi Arabia," Congressional Research Service, FAND, Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), 25 June 1979, p. 534.
5. "Trouble in Camelot--Arabian style," by Dawn W. Williams, Christian Science Monitor, 23 August 1979, p. 23.
6. Quoted in: "U.S. Aides Say Corruption Is Threat to Saudi Stability," by Philip Taubman, New York Times, 16 April 1980, p. A 8; see also "Saudi Prince is Said to Have Made a Fortune in Business," same page.
7. "(A)lthough a wide disparity between the upper and lower levels of society does persist, the standard of living of the poorer Saudis has improved to such an extent that they now seem to identify their interests fully with the preservation of the Saudi monarchy." Adeed I. Dawisha, Saudi Arabia's Search for Security, Adelphi Papers No. 158, International Institute of Strategic Studies (London 1979), p. 31.
8. New York Times, 5 February 1980, p. A 14.
9. See Dawisha, op. cit., p. 14.
10. There is no reliable census figure for the indigenous Saudi population. Estimates range from 3.5 to 8 million. To quote J.C. Hurewitz of the Middle East Institute, Columbia University, "The true Saudi population, as distinct from foreigners who are resident there, probably does not exceed four million." The MacNeil/Lehrer Report, Show No. 5248, 11 June 1980.
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17. See "Saudi minority sect is restive," by James Dorsey, Christian Science Monitor, 20 February 1980, p. 12.
18. "Royal Family Target of Leftist Drive," by David Leigh, Washington Post, 22 July 1980, p. A 8.
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20. Quoted in: "A growing opposition in Saudi Arabia," by Helena Cobban, Christian Science Monitor, 30 November 1979, p. 6.
21. Ibid; also, "New Information Indicates Political Motivation Behind Mecca Mosque Takeover," by Youssef M. Ibrahim, New York Times, 25 February 1980, p. A 10.
22. References include: FBIS, NC 301154 and NC 301435, 30 November 1979, and LD 131625, 10 December 1979; The Economist Foreign Report, 1610, 28 November 1979, and 1613, 19 December 1979; New York Times, 26 November 1979, 18 November 1979 (2 articles), 30 November 1979, p. A 18, 5 February 1980, p. A 14, and 25 February 1980, pp. A 1, A 10; Christian Science Monitor, 30 November 1979, p. 6, and 11 January 1980, p. 4; and Halliday, op. cit., p. 39.
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 35. Preece, op. cit., p. 529.
 36. Dawisha, Orbis, op. cit., p. 138.
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77. New York Times, 26 October 1979.
78. New York Times, 6 August 1979, p. A 4.
79. See "Soviet Activity," op. cit., NYT, 10 June 1980, p. A 13; see also "Soviet Said to Build Arms Caches in Libya, Syria, Persian Gulf Area," by Drew Middleton, New York Times, 14 March 1980; further sources remain unnamed at their own request.
80. Dale R. Tahtinen, National Security Challenges to Saudi Arabia, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, (Washington, D.C., 1978), p. 7.
81. Louis Turner and James Bedore, "Saudi Arabia: The Power of the Purse-Strings," International Affairs (London), Vol. 54 No. 3 (July 1978), p. 413.
82. See "Saudi-Yemen Frontier: Skirmishes in the Desert," by Christopher S. Wren, New York Times, 8 May 1980, p. A 2.
83. Ibid.
84. See "In Yemen, the East and West Do Meet," by Christopher S. Wren, New York Times, 7 May 1980, p. A 12.
85. Middle East Economic Digest, 9 March 1979, p. 22.
86. "In Yemen," op. cit., NYT, 7 May 1980, p. A 12.
87. New York Times, 19 March 1980, pp. A 1, A 13.
88. See "Big Power Rivalry Echoed in Latest Yemen Shake-Up," by Christopher S. Wren, New York Times, 27 April 1980, p. E 2.
89. New York Times, 30 June 1980, p. A 3.
90. The Saudis are the PLO's biggest benefactor.
91. See "Architect Defends Jerusalem Wall Project," by David K. Shipler, New York Times, 17 July 1980, p. A 3.
92. As of September 1980, the only operative embassies still in Jerusalem belonged to Latin American countries.
93. CBS Evening News, 30 July 1980.
94. Quoted in: "Jerusalem, Where Neither Side Dares Give Any Quarter," by Christopher S. Wren, New York Times, 3 August 1980, p. E 4.
95. New York Times, 29 July 1980, p. A 6.
96. Turkey must import over 80 percent of its oil, and because of this the economy has suffered in recent years. As a result, Turkey's political leaders, including the avidly pro-Western Suleyman Demirel, have paid rhetorical homage to the OAPEEC countries' oil power on issues related to the Palestine dispute. It will be interesting

to see if Turkey's military leaders, having temporarily suspended democratic government in Turkey, will succumb as readily to Arab political pressures as did the civilians.

97. Christian Science Monitor, 7 August 1980, p. 2.
98. "Israelis Lobby For Annexing Golan Heights," by James M. Markham, New York Times, 19 August 1980, p. A 6.
99. "Israelis Back Mediterranean-Dead Sea Link," New York Times, 25 August 1980, p. A 3.
100. "Israel Reported to Plan For 85 New Outposts In West Bank Region," New York Times, 10 July 1980, p. A 5; see also, "Facts about West Bank," Boston Globe, 30 September 1980, p. 2.
101. Quoted in: New York Times, 31 July 1980, p. A 8.
102. Quoted in: "Saudi Policy and U.S. Misperception," by Joseph Churba, Washington Star, 16 July 1979, p. A 11.
103. Turner and Bedore, op. cit., p. 409.
104. Quoted in: "Radicalism Abroad," by Constantine C. Menges, New York Times, 11 June 1980, p. A 31.
105. Quoted in: "Palestinian Organizations," in The Middle East and North Africa 1978-79, Europa, 1979, pp. 75-76.
106. Claudia Wright, "Iraq--New Power in the Middle East," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 58 No. 2 (Winter 1979/80), p. 276.
107. Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, "Shifting Sands of Peace in the Middle East," International Security, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Summer 1980), p. 58.
108. A former chief of U.S. Air Force Intelligence, Ret. Gen. George F. Keegan, said on 17 May 1978 that "...it has been a strong Israeli capability that, in my opinion, has kept the Soviets at bay in the Mideast, and thus far has prevented the more radical Arab regimes from capturing and seizing Saudi Arabia," Quoted in: Letter to the Editor, Boston Globe, 5 August 1980, p. 10.
109. Preece, op. cit., p. 531.
110. The Jerusalem issue controversy may lead the Saudis to undertake major oil production cuts, thereby exerting more pressure on the U.S. than at any time since the 1973 oil embargo. See "Saudis Warn U.S. To Pressure Israel on Jerusalem or Lose Oil." Washington Post, 29 August 1980, pp. E 1, E 8.
111. "Assad fears 'Litani 2' in South Lebanon," by David Hirst, Manchester Guardian Weekly, 12 August 1979, p. 9.
112. New York Times, 25 August 1980, p. A 3.

113. Ibid., p. A 3.
114. New York Times, 19 August 1980, p. A 6.
115. See Dwight James Simpson, "Israel After Thirty Years," Current History, January 1979, pp. 14-18, 36.
116. New York Times, 30 July 1980, p. A 5.
117. New York Times, 11 June 1980, p. A 4.
118. IISS, The Military Balance 1979-1980, op. cit., p. 40.
119. Quoted in: "Saudis Seek Equipment for F-15's, Posing Quandary for Washington," by Richard Burt, New York Times, 17 June 1980, p. A 1.
120. Quoted in: New York Times, 10 July 1980, p. A 7.
121. Much of the information on which this analysis is based comes from Charles M. Perry, "The Threat of Less Advanced Arms: The Arab-Israeli Case," in Uri Ra'anan, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., and Geoffrey Kemp (eds), Arms Transfers to the Third World: The Military Buildup in Less Industrial Countries, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979.
122. Ibid., p. 298.
123. American Israel Public Affairs Committee, "F-15s to Saudi Arabia--A Threat to Peace," Washington, D.C., 1978, p. 3.
124. Quoted in: New York Times, 18 June 1980, p. A 10.
125. Letter to the Editor, New York Times, 30 June 1980, p. A 18.
126. New York Times, 17 June 1980, p. A 4.
127. The Middle East, August 1979, p. 31.
128. Dawisha, IISS, op. cit., p. 28.
129. New York Times, 17 June 1980, p. A 4.
130. Remarks made on 'Face the Nation,' CBS News, 18 March 1979.
131. John M. Collins and Clyde R. Mark, "Petroleum Imports from the Persian Gulf: Use of U.S. Armed Force to Ensure Supplies," Issue Brief no. IB79046, CRS/FAND, Library of Congress, 26 April 1979 (updated 14 August 1979), p. 23.
132. Prospects for Israeli preemption are a secondary question, since the vastly more competent Israelis would probably enjoy no less success and sustain no greater losses if the Saudis were allowed the first move.
133. See Wright, Foreign Affairs, op. cit., pp. 257-77; see also, "Iraq regime: Shaky start, then success," by Barbara Elfstrom, Boston Globe, 10 August 1980, p. 44.
134. Cottrell and Hanks, op. cit., p. 52.

135. Middle East Newsletter, 16 July 1979, p. 10.
136. New York Times, 28 July 1979, p. 3.
137. Economist, 6 April 1980, p. 30.
138. Quoted in: Newsweek, 30 July 1979, p. 50.
139. Business Week, 20 August 1979, p. 44.
140. Economist, 12 April 1980, p. 24.
141. Boston Globe, 10 August 1980, p. 44.
142. New York Times, 21 February 1980.
143. See Stanley F. Reed III, "Dateline Syria: Fin de Régime?," Foreign Policy, Number 39 (Summer 1980), pp. 176-90.
144. New York Times, 2 March 1980, p. E 3.
145. "Syrian leader welcomes Libya's call for merger," Boston Globe, 3 September 1980, p. 3; see also "Syria and Libya Agree to Merge but Reveal No Details," by John Kifner, New York Times, 3 September 1980, p. A 5.
146. Christian Science Monitor, 21 August 1979, p. 11.
147. William E. Griffith, "Super-power Relations after Afghanistan," Survival, July/August 1980, p. 149.
148. Tass commentary, 17 April 1980, reprinted in Survival, ibid., p. 176.
149. Quoted on: '60 Minutes,' CBS News, 24 August 1980.
150. According to Dimitri Simes: "Soviet behavior does not amount to strategy; yet it is more than simple opportunism. It is an increasingly defined pattern of imperial behavior from a position of strength. Such behavior always has the potential for developing into something more comprehensive and far-reaching." Dimitri K. Simes, "The Death of Détente?," International Security, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Summer 1980), pp. 19-20.
151. New York Times, 8 February 1980, p. A 6.
152. An April 1977 C.I.A. study predicted that by the mid-1980s the U.S.S.R. would have to import 3.5 million barrels of oil per day. This estimate has since been revised downward, but the trend of declining self-sufficiency is still foreseen. See: New York Times, 15 April 1980, p. A 14.
153. Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, op. cit., p. 72.
154. "Saudis, Stressing Regional Stability, See Soviet Threat," by Youssef M. Ibrahim, New York Times, 4 October 1979, p. A 10.
155. Quoted in: The Middle East, August 1979, p. 33.

156. Economist, 24 May 1980, p. 50.
157. "Sadat Accuses Saudis of Playing Off East Against West," by Christopher S. Wren, New York Times, 29 January 1980, p. A 3.
158. Ibid.
159. Quoted in: "Moscow Courts Saudi Arabia," Soviet Analyst, Vol. 8 No. 12, 14 June 1979, p. 2.
160. Dawisha, Orbis, op. cit., p. 141.
161. Washington Post, 22 July 1980, p. A 8.
162. Quoted in: George Linabury, "The Creation of Saudi Arabia and the Erosion of Wahhabi Conservatism," Middle East Review, Vol. XI No. 1 (Fall 1978), p. 9.
163. State of the Union Address, 23 January 1980.
164. 'Issues and Answers,' ABC News, 18 March 1979.
165. Under a 1951 mutual defense assistance agreement, the U.S. provided arms and training to the Saudis in return for American access to the Dhahran airbase; the Dhahran "lease" was discontinued in 1962.
166. Dawisha, Orbis, op. cit., p. 138.
167. Washington Star, 14 July 1979, p. A 5.
168. Peter Mangold, Superpower Intervention in the Middle East, St. Martin's Press, N.Y., 1978, p. 85.
169. U.S. News and World Report, 5 November 1979, p. 29.
170. Sources: U.S. News, ibid., p. 30; Donald E. Nuechterlein, "U.S. Interests in the Persian Gulf," Foreign Service Journal, July 1979, p. 14; "U.S. Expands Persian Gulf Naval Role," by Dean Brelis, Washington Star, 12 July 1979, p. A 3; U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. United States Foreign Policy Objectives and Overseas Military Installations, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1979, pp. 111-113.
171. See "U.S. to Resume Filling Oil Reserve, Officials Say, Despite Saudi Protest," by Richard D. Lyons, New York Times, 23 May 1980, pp. A 1, D 7. No oil has been purchased since November 1978 for the reserve, which presently has 91 million barrels, or twelve days' supply of imported oil. When U.S. oil price controls end on September 30, 1981, the cost of filling the reserve--now mandated to hold 1 billion barrels--will be considerably higher than it would be today. Christian Science Monitor, 18 September 1980, p. 24.
172. Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, op. cit., p. 68.

173. "Iraqi Diplomatic Strategy," by Claudia Wright, New York Times, 5 June 1980, p. A 23.
174. Quoted in: New York Times, 14 August 1980, p. A 7. Israeli Prime Minister Begin's reply to the Saudis: "We'll show them a holy war." Quoted in: New York Times, 29 August 1980, p. A 2.
175. Petroleum Intelligence Weekly reports that, "Oil inventories in some European nations have now reached the equivalent of 120 days' supply, while Japan is at a record 110 days and rising, and the United States at about 75 days." Quoted in: Boston Globe, 1 September 1980, p. 21. This assessment came before Iran and Iraq went to war and halted their oil exports, the loss of which has tightened the world oil market.
176. A recent issue of the Platts Oilgram News quoted a "senior Saudi government official," considering oil production cutbacks from the current level of 9.5 million barrels per day as an incentive for the West to pressure Israel to change its Jerusalem policy, thusly: "We could go to 7.5 million barrels a day, and then the next month, drop to 6.5 million, and so on." Quoted in: Washington Post, 29 August 1980, p. E 1.
177. "U.S. May Let Iraq Buy Jets Despite Terrorism Question," by Bernard Gwertzman, New York Times, 6 August 1980, p. A 5.
178. "U.S. Forbids Sale of Jetliners to Iraq," New York Times, 30 August 1980, p. A 2.
179. "U.S. Sending Freighters To Join Fleet in Arabian Sea," New York Times, 8 April 1980.
180. Economist, 30 August 1980, p. 32.
181. New York Times, 28 June 1980, p. A 5.
182. See "American ships to test the water at Indian Ocean ports," by Gary Thatcher, Christian Science Monitor, 7 August 1980, p. 3.
183. "U.S. and Somalia Sign Arms Accord," by Graham Hovey, New York Times, 23 August 1980, p. A 3. A subsequent report lists the first year price to the United States as \$20 million in military sales credits and \$58 million in economic aid. New York Times, 17 September 1980, p. A 14.
184. Samuel S. Stratton, Member of Congress, 28th Dist., N.Y., Letter to the Editor, New York Times, 27 July 1980, p. E 20.
185. "Somalia--A New Home for the Deployment Force," Newsweek, 1 September 1980, p. 35.
186. "U.S. and Egypt Discuss A Navy Base on Red Sea," New York

- Times, 27 August 1980, p. A 2.
187. "U.S. to spend up to \$400 m to develop base in Egypt," Boston Globe, 26 August 1980, p. 4; see also, "American bases--Buying friends," Economist, 30 August 1980, pp. 32-33.
188. In February 1980 Ethiopia "threatened invasion of Somalia if the U.S. should come to Berbera." John H. Spencer (former "principal foreign advisor to Ethiopia"), Letter to the Editor, New York Times, 29 August 1980, p. A 18.
189. See "For Proud Somalis, Bristling Neighbors," by Gregory Jaynes, New York Times, 3 September 1980, p. A 2.
190. Following the aborted U.S. attempted rescue of the hostages in Iran in April 1980, Saudi and Kuwaiti press reports were extremely critical of the American action, some calling it "terrorism". New York Times, 27 April 1980, p. 16.
191. Newsweek, 6 August 1979, p. 35.
192. "French-Saudi Arms Deal Reported by Riyadh Radio," New York Times, 12 May 1980.
193. Economist, 19 April 1980, p. 11.
194. To give one example: When the U.S. aired the televised docu-drama film "Death of A Princess," the Saudis protested but took no action. When Britain aired the film, Riyadh asked for the removal of the British ambassador, tightened visa restrictions on British visitors, and threatened economic retaliation, which would have affected 30,000 British workers in the kingdom and disrupted a British export account worth \$2 billion in 1979. The diplomatic and economic chill lasted three months. See "British and Saudis Mending Relations," by Youssef M. Ibrahim, New York Times, 29 July 1980, p. A 2.
195. "Jordan's King Says He Welcomes European Peace Effort in Mideast," New York Times, 11 August 1980, p. A 12.
196. "A Pessimistic Hussein Looks to Europe," by David K. Ship-ler, New York Times, 25 April 1980, p. A 3.
197. Christian Science Monitor, 21 August 1979, p. 11.
198. See: Newsweek, 8 October 1979, p. 51.
199. Time, 13 August 1979, p. 27.
200. Quoted in: "Saudis Bolstering Links With Europe," by Youssef M. Ibrahim, New York Times, 7 October 1979.
201. "As Suppliers Change, Arab World Armed To the Teeth," by Drew Middleton, New York Times, 2 March 1980, p. E 3.
202. Quoted in: Laurel A. Mayer, "U.S. Arms Transfers Data Sources and Dilemmas," International Studies Notes

- (International Studies Association), Volume 7 Issue 2 (Summer 1980), p. 1.
203. Richard K. Betts, "The Tragicomedy of Arms Trade Control," International Security, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Summer 1980), p. 80.
 204. André Gunder Frank, "Arms Economy and Warfare in the Third World," Third World Quarterly, Vol. 11 No. 2 (April 1980), p. 230.
 205. Betts, op. cit., p. 97
 206. See "Iraq Seen Raising Oil Output; Decision Could Ease Shortage," by Ronald Koven, Washington Post, 13 July 1979, p. A 13.
 207. Economically, the Soviets may be considering a collaborative strategy with Europe. Paul Nitze writes of "the now-emerging possibility that the Soviet Union may offer to join West Germany and France in joint negotiations with Persian Gulf suppliers for long-term oil-purchase contracts in adequate volume and at stable prices." Paul H. Nitze, "Strategy in the Decade of the 1980s," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 59 No. 1 (Fall 1980), p. 88.
 208. Against all threats except a direct military Gulf incursion by the Soviet Union.
 209. "Key Saudis Removed In Wake Of Violence," New York Times, 2 January 1980, p. A 10.
 210. To give two more recent examples: In March 1980, four senior princes were placed by King Khalid on the governorships of the most important regions. In late July, Kuwait's al-Sabah clan dismissed twenty-eight officers from the security forces after investigations of two terrorist incidents yielded no culprits.
 211. Of the 40 National Guard units, only 17 are functional due to AWOL attrition. Halliday, op. cit., p. 40.
 212. IISS, The Military Balance 1979-1980, op. cit., p. 44. A National Service Program of conscription for all Saudi males between 18 and 35 is being introduced in 1980.
 213. "As Mideast Heats Up, U.S. Frets Over Peril To the Saudi Oil Fields," by Walter S. Mossberg, Wall Street Journal, January 1980, pp. 1, 10.
 214. Halliday, op. cit., p. 40.
 215. Turner and Bedore, op. cit., p. 416.
 216. "Pakistan Said to Offer to Base Troops on Saudi Soil," by Richard Burt, New York Times, 20 August 1980, p. A 5.
 217. "Scratch my back," Economist, 13 September 1980, p. 40.
 218. The Middle East, August 1979, p. 31.

219. A congressional analysis of possible U.S. military intervention to defend Saudi Arabia's oilfields concludes that success in securing the continued flow of oil to the West would depend upon two critical conditions: damage to key installations must be slight; and the U.S.S.R. must abstain from armed intervention (should the U.S.S.R. arrive on the scene first, U.S. odds for success are greatly reduced). Collins and Mark (CRS/FAND), op. cit., p. 16. In addition to its 110,000-man Rapid Deployment Force, the U.S. has two other sources of military contingency forces which could be injected into a Gulf crisis: a U.S. Air Force "bare base" program of airlifting food, fuel, workshops and C3 facilities to any available airstrip; and a Marine Corps program dating from the mid-1970s for executing seaborne landings in the Middle East. See "Oil Price Rise Stirs Review of U.S. War Moves in Crisis," by Drew Middleton, New York Times, 5 July 1979, p. A 3. In February 1980, U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Robert W. Komer stated that an American brigade of 4,000 paratroopers could be placed in the Gulf in less than a week, and that the entire 82nd airborne unit out of Fort Bragg, N.C., could be lifted in within two weeks, if local governments cooperated by permitting use of landing areas. "U.S. Aide Notes Ability to Fly Units to Mideast," New York Times, 7 February 1980. Gen. Warner, head of the Rapid Deployment Force's Readiness Command, has said that a war game exercise showed that it would take 169 days to place the entire RDF in the Middle East, including equipment and support units. "Gaps in Training and Equipment Hinder Rapid Deployment Force," by Richard Halloran, New York Times, 26 September 1980, p. 24.
220. "7,000 Building A Military City in Saudi Arabia," by Bob Dudley, Washington Post, 22 August 1979, p. A 22.
221. Newsweek, 6 August 1979, p. 35.
222. Tahtinen, op. cit., pp. 10, 12-13.
223. Ibid., p. 13.
224. Quoted in: "U.S. Links Afghan Situation and Saudis' Jet Request," by Bernard Gwertzman, New York Times, 18 June 1980, p. A 10.
225. New York Times, 10 April 1978, p. A 4.
226. Examples: support for Morocco's King Hassan II against the Algerian-backed Polisario guerrillas, to protect Saudi interests in the iron mines of Mauritania; sponsorship of an October 1976 summit in Riyadh to mediate a truce to the Lebanese civil war; payments to Somalia to oust the U.S.S.R. from Berbera; payments to anti-Marxist conservative tribes in North Yemen; support (before the

September 1980 military takeover in Ankara) of the Islamic National Salvation Party in Turkey; payments to the Marcos government in the Philippines to aid resolution of Muslim unrest on Mindanao; support for the Eritrean Muslims against Ethiopia; support for Egyptian troops in Zaire; arms for the Habré faction in the Chad civil war; clandestine support of the anti-Assad "Muslim Officers Association" within the Syrian army; aid to Pakistan and Bangladesh; mediation of the 1970 Jordanian-Palestinian conflict. (In 1976, 96 percent of Saudi Arabia's aid went to Islamic countries. Dawisha, IISS, op. cit., p. 17.)