

4

GenevaPapers

Middle East Perspectives

Conference Proceedings from Gstaad, Switzerland



RAND

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST
PUBLIC POLICY

International Programs at RAND

David Aaron, Shahram Chubin,
Shai Feldman and Abdulaziz Sager

Conference Rapporteur: Siobhan Martin



Brandeis University

Crown Center
for Middle East Studies



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All



The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) offers a valuable forum to a world in a continuous search for peace and security. Our mandate is to promote independent policy dialogue and understanding across cultures and, through capacity building, serve to stabilize regions in crisis, transition, and reconstruction.

L'Esprit de Genève

In the early 16th Century, Geneva established its longstanding identity as a city of sanctuary and refuge for ideas and beliefs, and for the people who espoused them. Initially embracing and protecting victims of religious persecution during the Reformation, this tradition of mutual tolerance and openness has continued into the 21st century.

With its spirit of tolerance, neutrality and discretion, Geneva has become a space where people with differences can meet for open dialogue about critical issues.

The Geneva Papers

The Geneva Papers promote a vital dialogue on timely and cutting-edge global security issues. The series showcases new thinking about security issues writ large – ranging from human security to geopolitical analysis.

Persistent and emerging security challenges are explored through the multiple viewpoints and areas of expertise represented in GCSP conference proceedings and by speaker presentations.

The Papers offer innovative analyses, case studies and policy prescriptions, with their critiques, to encourage on-going discussion both within international Geneva and the wider global community.

To request additional copies of this, or any other Geneva Paper, please contact: info@gcsp.ch, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, avenue de la Paix 7 bis, P.O. Box 1295, CH-1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland

Middle East Perspectives

Conference Proceedings from Gstaad, Switzerland

David Aaron, Shahram Chubin,
Shai Feldman and Abdulaziz Sager

Rapporteur: Siobhan Martin

Table of Contents

GEOPOLITICAL AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS: AN OVERVIEW	5
THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT	12
LEBANON	15
TURKEY AND ITS ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST	17
IRAQ.....	19
IRAN AND THE GULF(GCC AND OIL)	25
CONCLUSIONS.....	33
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE.....	38
PARTICIPANTS.....	42

GEOPOLITICAL AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS: AN OVERVIEW

The Middle East and its security remains a vital ingredient in international security. The region's tensions, conflicts and stability are of fundamental concern to a wide range of actors, whose interests or proximity make it a priority. The novelty today is the increasing inter-relations of these conflicts and instability and the limitations of outside power influence. This, together with the appearance of new actors in the region, namely India and China, seems likely to transform diplomacy in the future. Regional dynamics, which are increasingly resistant to outside power influence or control, continue to shape the strategic environment. These dynamic forces, ranging from terrorism, sectarianism, and on-going conflicts, intersect and add to the region's instability and fragmentation. The conflict zone (from the Levant to Iran) overlaps the "energy ellipse" (in the Gulf), that is, the dependence of much of the world on this region for energy supplies. Superimposed on this is the related feature of the region, namely the emergence in the GCC of the 'super rich' states, carving out a new niche and economic identity with their newfound wealth. The region is thus complex: unstable, vulnerable, and wealthy in parts. Weak, shattered, or embryonic states (Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine) co-exist with strong states like Egypt, cautious ones like Saudi Arabia, and ambitious ones, notably Iran. What seems clear from the perspective of 2008 is the continuing need for international engagement, combined with a recognition that this engagement must be constructive and cannot substitute for local initiatives or substitute for local forces, which at best, can only be harnessed, not controlled.

The extraordinary growth of states in the Gulf.

With the rise in the price of oil, these super-rich maturing countries will have more of a geopolitical role, and this will ultimately lead to tensions, considering the contrasting levels of income in the more fragmented neighbouring countries. On the other hand, the increase in income could dramatically improve economic development, and perhaps help to stabilise the countries, thus allowing for positive steps in the Arab-Israeli conflict, for example. At the same time, the ongoing political conflicts (Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq) could also neutralise the potential economic opportunities available.

The focus on the changing Middle East from external powers:

In **Europe**, despite increased attention from France's President Sarkozy illustrated by his plans to place a military base in the United Arab Emirates and his overtures to Syria, neither Europe nor European states can substitute for the US role. At most, they can complement, facilitate or backup, the US role. Their role in the nuclear issue with Iran reflects this clearly. The same applies vis-à-vis Palestine. The Europeans can nevertheless influence, temper and ground US policies in a pragmatic appreciation of what works and what does not.

Asia's relationship with the Middle East is more important than simply as an oil consumer. It may become a political and security partner in the future, although its potential in this area is uncertain. First, it may not wish to play a very active role. Second, it may not be able in any sense to replace that of the US. Third, Asian states may well have similar concerns for regional stability, but seek this in ways very different from that of the US. So far, China has had an arms relationship with various states, in addition to having oil interests in Saudi Arabia and Iran. China may not wish to choose between rival states or get entangled in regional politics. India has longstanding ties with the Persian Gulf, which are now growing. It, too, will avoid destabilising the region or choosing among its players. Other Asian states, like North Korea, have not played a stabilising role in the region: witness the reactor sale to Syria and missile transfers to Iran.

The US role was much discussed. It is clear that the US has destabilised the region since the Republicans replaced Clinton, by acts of commission and omission. Foremost is the neglect of the Palestinian/Israel issue, where time and distrust have made it much harder to resolve. Where the US has been active, it has been to undermine the status quo, notably in Iraq, where the consequence has been the spillover of instability into the wider region. Lebanon does not stand out as a success either.

This raises the broader question as to what role the US, in fact, plays in the region. While ostensibly the 'security manager' buttressing stability in the region, in recent years, the US has "imported insecurity" into the region, raising questions about its true role and the desirability of that role. Some suggested that the US had no 'natural' role in region, it had no past colonial relationship (or responsibility) to look back on, no constituency and, indeed, no natural affinity for the region. It was suggested by some that other powers, perhaps India, might have a greater empathy for the region and greater prospect for a useful role.

The role of Russia remains marginal in the region, where it can foment or underscore problems, but has little positive influence (or incentive) for creative diplomacy. This is most evident in regard to Iran where Russia has influence, but is uncertain how to exercise it, torn between the competing impulses of frustrating the US and confronting the regime in Tehran.

Inter-regional negotiations. Given the limits on outside powers' influence and understanding, it is not surprising to see the proliferation of regional initiatives, often in opposition to US preferences. Egypt has continuously worked behind the scenes, leading to a six-month truce between Israel and Hamas. Turkey is responsible for facilitating the talks between Israel and Syria. Qatar hosted and mediated an agreement among the factions in Lebanon. Germany has been active, discreetly putting together a prisoner swap between Israel and Hezbollah.

The emergence of a new paradigm in international relations. Historically, the US has tended to intensify its efforts on Israel/Palestine at the end of a presidential second term, the obvious example being Clinton at Camp David. But this is also the period when the administration is more or less a 'lame duck.' This was very evident in the half-hearted Bush effort at Annapolis. In effect, this outline or 'shelf' agreement is unlikely

to produce results or even give the appearance of doing so. Whether this means the conflict will deteriorate further or, more optimistically, 'ripen' remains to be seen. What is clear is that the parties cannot, and even should not, rely on the US to sort things out for them and this may be a salutary lesson/conclusion.

These trends suggest a real transition in the geopolitics of the region.

Evolving US priorities. Any new US administration will have as a priority, withdrawal from Iraq, the war in Afghanistan, the economy/energy, Iran's nuclear ambitions, not to mention commitments in Asia, all of which will leave little space (or capital) for concentration on the Palestine/Israel issue. There may well be domestic pressures for a reduced presence in the Middle East as well. If the regional states are unhappy with the recent US role, they may become even unhappier by a more reluctant, selective US, limiting its commitments.

The rise of regional powers. The proposition that the US was in retreat or decline, as opposed to being merely mistaken in recent years, was debated. The perception among regional states of US ineptitude and ebbing influence was broadly acknowledged, with the result that the US reputation in the region is at an all-time low. Local leaders have been dealing or living with their conflicts for a long time, and are not in the happy US position of being able to select crises or contemplate withdrawal. The US has upset the regional balance, which has empowered Iran and, some would say, the rejectionist front (Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas), leaving the region in tatters. Lebanon and Gaza are examples of a failed democratisation plan; the shattering of the Iraqi state has left Iran in a strong position to pick up and influence the pieces. The US was, at best, on the sidelines in the Lebanese political discussions that were held in Qatar, and in the Israeli-Syrian talks, which were facilitated by Turkey. The obvious consequences of the absence of the US would be for the countries that have enjoyed the security derived from the US presence to look for substitutes. And there is a risk that Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas will step into any perceived vacuum. On the other hand, the presence of the US could be seen as preventing regional powers from resolving the crises themselves.

Local and regional dynamics are dominant and not always easily anticipated or analysed. They are clearly linked and often transnational, empowering non-state actors and militias. Indicative of this is the rise of sectarian identities and affiliations. It was argued that seven countries have collapsed or suffered extreme difficulties since the beginning of the Bush administration, with attendant spillovers. The ‘knock-on effect’ of Iraqi or Lebanese instability is felt region-wide, as weak or non-existent states have ceded power to non-state players, making them key actors in regional politics. The current US administration will leave office under a cloud, bequeathing a difficult legacy to its successor. Israel needs to restore or fashion a credible deterrence against Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran. Asymmetrical conflict is not new, but it does raise political, as well as military, issues at a time when Israel is weak politically. Democracy promotion has surely worked against stability promotion, and its application, selectively or not at all, has angered quite different constituencies. Terrorism may be declining in the political struggle among factions in Iraq, but it may be surging in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the case of Saudi Arabia, a ‘wild card’ could be a successful assault on an oil facility.



Regimes less stable and states less relevant. In seeking 'regime change,' US policy has empowered non-state actors (and Iran). None of these are easily persuaded to follow 'moderate' policies or any longer fear US power. Yet, if the US cannot 'organise the region,' the question arises whether others can? Iran has offered its hostile candidature, opening its campaign in Iraq and Lebanon. But this is clearly unacceptable to the Arab Sunni powers, who cannot, and do not have, the habit of taking regional initiatives alone. They are forced by circumstances to rely on the US as at least an ultimate insurance policy, even though they have seen the limits of doing so. At the same time, the cumulative effect of multiple crises, the Palestinian stalemate, the perceived threat from Iran and the growing politicisation of their publics, leave these regimes vulnerable to the 'Arab street' and troublemakers questioning their legitimacy.

The erosion of state power. The most precarious and current example is Egypt, which appears to be approaching a crisis point. Egypt hardly fills the role of Arab leader any more, and its ties with Syria and Saudi Arabia are tenuous at best. Bread and butter issues such as escalating food prices, a fear of returning to the food riots of 1977, and the issue of succession have led to nervousness and the security services' heavy-handedness, which now intrusively affect the daily life of the average citizen. The army wishes to avoid confrontation as long as its privileged conditions are maintained, and there is the widely-felt sense of deception at the denials that Gamal Mubarak will inherit his father's role, when his increasing influence and authority within the government suggest otherwise. These issues have culminated in widespread frustration and contempt for the state, seen to be more and more ineffective. The state is losing its 'aura.' This fatigue goes hand-in-hand with nationalistic and Islamic sentiment, and the only politics that remain are anti-Israeli and anti-US, as traditional secular nationalism collapses into Islamism. Thus, Egypt is in a precarious situation, with the potential for a very serious domestic crisis ahead. How a different regime would position itself in terms of regional issues and alignments is altogether uncertain.

The rising price of oil today contrasts with its falling price a decade ago, which also raised political questions. The quadrupling of prices in the past four years has given oil producers windfall revenues that they appear-- mostly-- to be using well. The super-rich countries of the GCC are investing in infrastructure, downstream projects, and in sovereign

funds for the future. They have an interest in restraining the continued rise of the price of oil, which could undermine their future role as producers. They also have stake in the world economy and avoiding recession. They are also wary of the sudden liquidity, which is creating political problems for them, combined with the accompanying galloping domestic inflation. On a different level, the influx of funds weakens the pressures for the kinds of structural economic reforms that these countries need if they are to diversify away from oil and gas. Whether the issue of 'peak oil' is real or not, the Gulf producers will remain the key sources of world oil supplies and, in addition to the increased demands of Asia, will need to keep an eye on their own unrestrained and growing domestic consumption, which will limit their ability to continue to export significant quantities. This is especially true in the case of Iran and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia. At the same time, the surge in oil prices, coincident with rising food prices, is leading to political tensions in states like Egypt where 'downward mobility' appears a reality for the middle classes.



THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The autumn 2007 US-sponsored Annapolis conference marked the most recent attempt to facilitate reconciliation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conference declared the goal of negotiating a permanent status agreement by the end of 2008. This would require an agreement covering both the practical and the symbolic dimensions of all the core issues. Recent developments, however, make many sceptical as to whether this goal can be reached. The main issue lies in the domestic politics of both sides. Neither Abu Mazen, as leader of the Palestinian Authority, nor anyone on the Israeli side, is currently in a position “to deliver” an agreement which will entail significant and difficult compromises. While Hamas does not have to actually sign off on an agreement for one to take place, it at least needs to tolerate whatever understanding Abu Mazen reaches with Israel, since it has considerable potential to derail any possible agreement. Yet, Abu Mazen will not be able to secure the consent of Hamas regarding a permanent status agreement, as the core symbolic issues – the right of return of refugees and sovereignty in Jerusalem – involve ideological stances that Hamas is not willing to concede.

The role of the US, for its part, has only been effective in Arab-Israeli peacemaking when the administration talked to the parties with one voice. However, different emissaries with different messages have been sent to the parties in the past few years, especially to Israel, including some suggesting that the Secretary of State may not be speaking for the President. While clearly important, the US position is altogether unclear. There is a need for the new administration, which will enter office in early

2009, to clarify its approach. First, the new US president will have to assess the priority of this issue. Second, the new administration will need to assess whether the existing conditions allow progress to be made. Third, there is a need to look at possibly segmenting the problem, and perhaps reorganizing the focus – from permanent status to more modest goals. Fourth, one must consider whether a significant economic improvement, in the lives of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, would have an effect on the overall situation.

Though many difficulties exist, and many changes are needed in approaching the conflict, there have been some positive developments in recent months:

- We are seeing the debut of improved security in the northern West Bank, which is partly due to US support, but is partly indigenous. Ninety million USD have been appropriated by the US Congress to train Palestinian forces. The first battalion has completed its training in Jordan, and has been deployed in Jenin, and the second battalion is currently in training. It is likely that additional funds will be made available to train and deploy at least two more battalions, though this has not yet been confirmed.
- The first of these battalions has received high marks from the local population – for helping establish law and order – as well as from some of the higher echelons of the Israeli Defense Forces. This makes it more likely that there will be a gradual lifting of roadblocks and checkpoints in the Jenin area, allowing the Palestinian population there easier movement and access. However, the Palestinian forces deployed face a fundamental challenge in being accepted as legitimate by the local population, since some see them as working on behalf of Israel (or the US). Political progress must accompany the progress in the security realm if these forces are to be successful in the longer term.
- On the economic front, a successful investors' conference was recently held in Bethlehem. There are also plans to create three industrial parks, one near Jenin (with German support), another near Hebron (with Turkish support), and a third in the Jericho area (with Japanese support). In addition, about half a billion dollars has been appropriated from various US sources to provide mortgages for low-cost housing in the West Bank.

- The interim government of the Palestinian Authority, although effectively operating only in the West Bank, is seen as being efficient, and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad is appreciated for moving beyond the past corrupt habits of the PA.
- One of the most important recent developments is the Egyptian-brokered truce between Israel and Hamas. Though in its first days, its application was incomplete, it nevertheless signifies recognition by both sides of the futility of the current situation and the need to avoid further violence. The Israeli defence community has no desire to reconquer Gaza, partly because there is no clear exit strategy for such a move, and Hamas is aware that it cannot meet the material or security needs of their Gaza constituents as long as it continues to launch Kassam rockets against Israel's southern towns and settlements. A ceasefire is the only alternative, however fragile it may appear.
- We are also witnessing the opening of a dialogue between Fatah and Hamas., How dependent it will be on the ability of Hamas to maintain the ceasefire remains to be seen, but Abu Mazen acknowledges the dialogue as a necessity, as do some in Israel, albeit in the minority. Israel needs a single Palestinian address, so the current fragmentation of Palestine is not helpful to either side.
- The Syrian-Israeli talks, facilitated by Turkey, appear promising. Despite initial US opposition to such talks, they are taking place because they serve the interests of both Israel and Syria. Although public attitudes in Israel about these talks range from scepticism to opposition – since everyone is aware that peace with Syria will require total withdrawal from the Golan – the talks are strongly supported by the Israeli defence community.
- The last, most important, development is the new government in Lebanon, and the agreement on the new president. This should not be seen as an entirely negative development, despite the seeming victory of Hassan Nasrallah, as leader of Hezbollah. Though he is now part of the government, which is not necessarily a positive development, this will at least impose a higher degree of responsibility on Hezbollah/Nasrallah as Lebanese political actors.

LEBANON

The abrupt change in 2005, with the UN Security Council Resolution 1559, was followed by a series of dramatic events, namely the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri, and the withdrawal of the Syrian army, which completely transformed the internal dynamics of the country. When Lebanon returned to normal politics and previously banned parties re-emerged, the ensuing elections demonstrated considerable internal and external changes.

Internally, there had previously been competition between politicians within each community, thus giving the system its democracy. After 2005, there was a change in the Lebanese Sunni and Shiite communities. Hezbollah and Amal, who together represent a large portion of the Shi'a community, monopolised and shared power. In the Sunni community, there was no one to compete with Hariri, and Christian communities returned to politics in a limited way. This sense of disequilibrium, of competition *between* communities, and not *within* communities, has resulted in serious problems. External events also had repercussions on Lebanon. The relationship between Syria and Saudi Arabia entered a period of tension, and in the case of Syria and the US, atrophied. Iran's more prominent role considerably changed the political dynamics, as did the continued armament of Hezbollah, the tribunal to investigate the assassination of Hariri, the war of 2006, and the withdrawal of Israel from the south (in 2000).

The remnants of these internal and external changes continue to affect the political situation, and the past year has been extremely unsettled, which was reflected in the crisis and stalemate around the presidential elections. However, there were no major problems with Hezbollah until the government decided to cut their telecommunications in May. This led to a violation by Hezbollah of its pledge never to use arms against the Lebanese people and Nasrallah's previous apology for doing so in 2006: "We are defending our weapons by using our weapons." But, while Hezbollah's show of force was an indication of its will, it also weakened its reputation and aura in Lebanon as a whole.

The political divide in Lebanon, therefore, is deep and, despite its long history of ecumenical coexistence, faces serious, unprecedented, internal, sectarian problems.

Uncertainty remains as to how far Hezbollah would really go if, for example, Iran were to be attacked. While close to Iran, Hezbollah operates under specific constraints; it is a Lebanese-based political party and represents the Shi'a community in more than just weapons. The priority for Hezbollah is clearly Hezbollah as a Lebanese political entity. Yet if it is to use force and to justify it to its supporters, it must have a *Lebanese* pretext. This would suggest likely restraint or inhibition in the use of arms in support of a purely Iranian interest. Thus, though the presence of its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in government may not be the most positive development, it may at least force him to be more responsible for his actions, and more hesitant to break his pact with the Lebanese people.

The Shebaa farms issue remains one of continuous tension, but is one that can, in theory, be resolved very easily by clarifying the borders. It continues to have a significant impact on the internal situation within Lebanon, allowing Hezbollah to use the issue to keep the 'resistance' alive, and affects their relationship with Syria. Even so, there is no guarantee that, even if the farms are turned over to the UN, there will be any change. Addressing the issue of the farms will open the discussion regarding the continuing justification for Hezbollah bearing arms and the general defence policy. The risk of civil war in Lebanon seems low, despite the instability. For the moment, Lebanon needs to focus on adjusting to changes domestically, building up its political strength, and constructing institutions that enable the government to function properly.

TURKEY AND ITS ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

There is a new activism in Turkey's foreign policy; it has closer ties to Iran and Syria, and brokered the talks between Israel and Syria. In the recent past, Turkey rejected involvement in the Middle East, but is now returning to a more traditional policy. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this neither means Turkey is turning its back on the West, nor does it mean that it is becoming Islamised.

This return to a previous norm is more likely due to the end of the cold war, in which the Soviet threat was eliminated, thus opening diplomatic opportunities, redefining where strategic interests now lie. Turkey did not see the benefits expected from cooperating with the US during the first Gulf war, and was one of the biggest losers in not supporting the Iraq invasion 2003. Iraq descended into chaos, Iran's influence has increased, the Kurdish bid for an independent state is becoming stronger, and the Turkish relationship with the US has deteriorated. The US wishes to isolate Iran and Syria; Turkey by contrast wants to engage them. Despite these differences, the US must continue dealing with Turkey, especially in a situation where the country is undergoing a profound crisis/ debate about the definitions of, and limits to, the Islamisation of society. Turkey's relationships with Iran and Syria are based on common concerns about an independent Kurdish state. With Iran, in addition, there is an energy relationship; Iran is a major supplier of energy to Turkey. While Turkey, which has seen investments in Iraqi Kurdish areas, may be somewhat less anxious about the potential for a Kurdish state in Iraq, its relationship with own Kurds remains fraught and the Kurdish parliamentary party is closed.

The constitutional case that has been brought against the AKP, based on its alleged Islamic leanings and 'anti-secular activities,' and the intention to close the party, is likely to lead to a major constitutional and domestic crisis.¹ The constitutional court takes its orders from the military high command, which means that the case will be decided by a conclave of military officers. The reaction to closure of the elected party and the banning of 70 people, including the Prime Minister, is likely to provoke a crisis domestically and with the Kurdish community. Since this also implicates Iraq, and the US by extension, it is becoming more and more a question for the entire region, and not one that can be handled domestically. The reaction from Europe to a reversal of the election will also be severe, and will further reduce Turkey's chances of becoming a full member of the EU. The reaction from the population is not expected to be unmanageable but secularists are becoming concerned about the growing relationship between nationalism and Islam, which may be reinforced by a "secularist coup."

The new Turkish relationship with the Middle East also caused tensions within the government itself, with opposing views from the President and Prime Minister over the Lebanon crisis. Prime Minister Erdoğan has had a significant part to play in Turkey's involvement in international politics, including the Israeli-Syrian talks, which President Gül will be obliged to continue even after Erdoğan, as leader of the AKP, leaves. This activist regional policy represents a significant shift for Turkey and for Middle Eastern politics, and is likely to continue. The silver lining in a closure of the AKP may be an opportunity for the next US president to develop a deal involving Iraq, Turkey and the US. In the meantime, uncertainty about the fate of Kurdish northern Iraq inflames the situation within Turkey.

The constitutional case, however, is unlikely to end the secular versus Islam debate. Unless the military succeeds in causing a split within the party, what was until now a modest Islamic party will probably reemerge under a new name, and will become more aggressive, especially in its relationship with the military.

¹ On July 30, 2008 the Court narrowly refused to ban the Party.

IRAQ

The broad consequences of the US invasion in Iraq are obvious. What remains uncertain is whether we have seen the worst, whether the risks of civil conflict and regional war are receding, or whether Iraq is finally heading in a direction that, though not necessarily stable, avoids civil war and a spiralling of violence, and sees a gradual but insecure normalcy resume. And, if the latter is the case, can the US now take a step back and reduce its involvement in the region? What are the biggest risks, and what sort of timeline for withdrawal is realistically feasible? Will Iran continue to be a dominant influence, and will it promote or tolerate a unified Iraq? How will it respond to the prospect of US bases in Iraq? What are the guarantees for Iraqi sovereignty, and are regional and multilateral agreements needed?

None of these and other questions can be answered with certainty. The key to understanding is an examination of the people, and their motivations. The past grievances of Iraqi political players continue to shape their politics. All of the major parties think that they must remain armed for the inevitable struggle they believe will come, and for which control of a militia will be necessary. Those who possess real political power are also seen to be exempt from the rule of law, and it is no surprise that they are seen as criminal organizations involved in drugs, questionable real estate and financial dealings. This makes the already fragile political sector with its weak executive, immature parliament (legally with very little power) and almost non-existent judiciary, even more of a challenge. Social processes are key, and something which

the US has not really focused on yet. The current Minister for Education has been referred to as 'Iranian' in terms of his perspective. Proper education is essential to prevent a distrust and hatred of the west in future generations.

The strengthening of the army is a rare area of progress. Army numbers have increased, currently at about 500'000, the quality is increasing, and they are becoming more competent, though loyalty remains a potential problem. The current government needs to control the army in order to solidify its authority. However, there is a danger in that the Shi'a dominated government will want to impose its own selected members at the head of the army. This Islamisation of the army must be avoided, especially as it appears to be the only (potential) national institution emerging that is not yet hostage to the militias. The US must also make sure that its mission is understood and accepted by the younger officers moving through the ranks, to prevent them being compromised or radicalised by any potential power struggle in the future.

Local politics will have a significant effect on the emerging powers within Iraq, and the Iraqi relationship with its neighbours. After the death of Saddam, a major centre of gravity was destroyed and led to the creation of several sectarian and ethnic alternative centres. The competition within ethnic communities and local areas for power has a certain dynamic in the region, with the Shi'a desire to maintain control, the Sunni desire to regain control, and the Kurdish desire for independence. This local dynamic was reinforced by the US and UK, confirming *de facto* power through the recognition of the local leaders. The US became deeply embroiled in its agreements with the local *Sahwa* tribes, and the UK was seen as compromised due to its relationship with local leaders in Basra. Part of the problem is that the movement in the south is often referred to as one movement, when in fact there are about thirty different tribes, each with their own set of rules, hierarchy and understanding. Another issue that remains is how to incorporate the former insurgent groups, the former Ba'athists, into the developing society. The old structures and sentiment may not have completely disappeared however, the spirit of Ba'athism and class resentment continues to exist, but may reappear in another form.

It is now accepted that the US will want to reduce its presence in Iraq, and both presidential candidates have committed to do so, though this may come faster if Obama is elected. However, since the US cannot leave in the immediate future, its long-term goals in Iraq need to be articulated and used to build a clear and effective strategy with bipartisan support, to enable Iraq to determine its own future thereafter. Different agencies within the US have different views on what their aims are, and should be. In general, the commonly-agreed goals are not to let Iraq become a safe haven for large-scale international terrorism, and not to let instability in Iraq destabilise the entire region. This entails creating a viable *modus vivendi* among disparate groups in Iraq, which requires that the US pay more attention to social processes.

An important factor to be considered is the strength of the armed forces. The Iraqi army is getting stronger, but based on the current status and equipment of the air force, the US will have to provide air cover for at least the next ten to fifteen years, although this may not be exclusively



provided from bases in Iraq. Though, publicly, all elements in Iraq would welcome a US withdrawal, for some this would go against their interests. The Sunnis in particular would feel less protected, with devastating consequences for the fragile coalition government. *Phased* withdrawal is the most prudent way for the US, to avoid the shock of fast withdrawal, and the accompanying political free-for-all it would unleash.

The fragmented political dynamic adversely affects the national government, and the ability of the US to withdraw as a result. Prime Minister Al-Maliki's authority only extends slightly in Iraq, and the sub-national, tribal, and cross-border affiliations confirm how weak the national state remains. Maliki's major dilemma is his dependence on, and resentment of, US protection, which has led to problems in negotiating a strategic alliance. There is also the "perplexing predicament" in the obvious dissonance between the central government and regional players, leading to confusion as to who is actually leading the country. This must be clarified and, to do so, there is a need to make local deals, approach the situation *as it is* because, as long as leaders maintain their own forces, the potential for regular clashes and a showdown is strong. The more the US disengages, the more the regional neighbours and neighbourhood will become involved. Regional players are waiting and willing to become involved (Syria wants to avoid another Lebanon, Turkey has obvious interests in Northern Iraq and Iran wants to prevent a US puppet state or base). Talks with Iran by the US were attempted and stopped in the course of the year. It is essential for all sides to accept that Iraqi sovereignty requires a local support system, if it is to grow into something dependable and defensible.

The US has to reach an agreement with the Iraqi government on the terms under which its forces will remain in the country, and the legal basis for US soldiers' presence and their conduct of operations. Normally, this is done in a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and a statement of principles. This is always a sensitive issue, even in friendly states with strong governments. Questions of sovereignty, independence and equity are raised by the legal implications of foreign states' military presence. In Iraq, there is a need to provide a solid framework for agreement without infringing on Iraqi sovereignty. The current proposal for agreement suggests the idea of long-term military bases, and raises the question of how Iran and its allies in Iraq would accept the idea of an indefinite US

military presence in the country and, by implication, the region. The US needs to ensure that this issue does not become a “lightning rod” serving to fuel nationalist, religious and radical opposition to the Iraqi as well as the US government. Some formula that meets US and Iraqi needs is required, but may be difficult to achieve since there is more than one Iraqi interest at play.

P.M. Al-Maliki has been making positive steps to stabilize the level of fragmentation and legitimise the various political factions. To accompany the Provincial Powers Act of February 2008, regional elections have been set for October 2008. These elections will be significant, considering the opposition to the act, particularly by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI/SIIC), and will be an indicator of where local powers lies, with much competition within the various factions. Prime Minister al-Maliki is constitutionally very weak, and, in introducing this act, which was barely passed and initially opposed, he hopes to consolidate his power.



Maliki is associated with the Dawa party; SCIRI has supported provincial centres and together with Sadrists is influential in the Najjaf and Kerbala (where Iran also has influence). The Sadrists are also rooted in the south (the Sadrists have the largest grassroots Shi'i constituency). As this suggests, intra-sectarian competition is as prevalent as cross-sectarian rivalry.

Cooperation at a local level can also be seen as one of the more positive trends in Iraq. Indicators so far point to an opportunity, and peaceful transfer of power to the provinces if the results of the upcoming elections are accepted by all parties. Perhaps we are seeing the emergence of a nationalism which is denouncing sectarianism, repudiating terrorism and rejecting the federal idea, and also preferring localism to a centralised government. Though this may not be what the US intended, these local agreements can be incrementally built upon to increase security and stability. That, in itself, is a positive step. The elections will be very important in establishing this, and the localism and regionalism will have much greater political expression if the elections are fairly held.

How a central government will look at a "national" army and whether it will act as another militia or not remain to be seen. A "corporate" identity for the army has yet to be created.

IRAN AND THE GULF (GCC AND OIL)

The monarchical states of the Arabian Peninsula are confident in their internal politics, possess large amounts of money, and have weathered numerous storms. This contrasts with the anachronistic view of the US and other parts of the region that they are immature, domestically weak, and can be easily 'pushed over.' In fact, not only are the GCC states politically resilient and stable but, with oil at 140 USD a barrel, their potential is high. Qatar perhaps more than most, exemplifies a more confident, open diplomacy which seeks to stabilise the region and spread the benefits of oil throughout the neighbourhood.

Saudi Arabia is seen as the reluctant competitor with Iran, pushed to the forefront due to the destruction of the Iraqi state, the price of oil, and the assertive role of Iran in the region. Saudi Arabia has not seen this competition as sectarian, having made their peace with their own Shi'ia. The competition with Iran is a more traditional one of a balance of power. Saudi Arabia puts a high value on the Kingdom and regional stability and, to this end, cultivates the US while looking at its broader options, always associating regional states with its diplomacy. The Saudis are clear on their relationship with their neighbours - supporting the withdrawal of Syria from the Lebanon, and establishing a clear border between Syria and the Lebanon. They are also concerned about both the US and Iran. Wary about the possibility of a Washington-Tehran agreement that may come at their expense, Saudi Arabia would see any sudden rapprochement as bound to affect Saudi security and status. At the same time, the Saudis fear an attack on Iran, which inevitably would involve neighbouring states.

Despite Saudi Arabia's obvious religious differences and rivalry with Iran, the sectarian element is only one in their overall relationship. Saudi opposition to the Iraqi government for example, is more to do with it being seen as an extension of Iran than the fact that it is Shi'a. The Saudi government holds conferences in attempts to bridge the gaps between the Sunni and Shi'i (and indeed among all faiths). It maintains a dialogue with Iran to this end.

The Saudi vulnerability due to their geographical position means that they have limited room to manoeuvre. Ignoring Iran, cutting a deal with Tehran, and attacking Iran all have their risks and are, in their way, all equally unacceptable. Their wish to engage and thus contain Iran is an acknowledgement, not only of current events in the region, but an assumption that the US is unreliable. Thus, they must reach out to Iran as much as possible, while maintaining their relationship with the US. They believe it would be difficult to deter Iran if the US were to leave, and thus, though they may resent it, they view the US presence as needed. In the context of Iran having a nuclear capability, there are some unattractive options: first, to seek an explicit US security umbrella; second, to follow the path of Iran in acquiring a nuclear capability, (which would take some time); or third, to seek protection from an established nuclear power like Pakistan.

The better solution then for both Saudi Arabia and the US would be to stop Iran's nuclear program. During the past few years as Iranian confidence has increased, Ahmadinejad's rhetoric has become more aggressive towards the West. This suggests that containment/deterrence will not be easily achieved. However, there are certain weaknesses domestically, which perhaps could be exploited by engagement. The Iranian presidential elections in 2009 may offer a candidate more willing to try diplomacy with the UNSC. This might affect the tenor of Iran's foreign policy, though not necessarily its content. The larger question remains as to whether there is a different path for Iran to take as a society and, if its foreign policy can become 'normal,' i.e. more like a state than a 'cause.'

The rise of Ali Larijani as speaker of the Parliament in Iran reflects the internal power struggles and alliances that are typical of Iran's domestic scene. An insider to the system, through his birth and marriage, and close to Ayatollah Khamenei the Supreme Leader, Larijani, the ex-nuclear

negotiator became speaker of the parliament in May 2008. He remains a member of the principal security decision-making body, the SNSC, and one of the two representatives of Khamenei, which provides him with an official platform/base. Given his previous position as Iran's principal negotiator, he will also have strong opinions on nuclear issues in his Parliamentary role. Moreover, he ran for Parliament as a representative of Qom not Tehran, i.e. with a strong clerical electoral base.

Ahmadinejad, in contrast with Larijani, does not have any ties to the ruling elite, nor is he a cleric. In fact, he has gone head-to-head with the orthodox clerics on a number of occasions. Early in his presidency, he outraged the clerics by unilaterally allowing women to enter football stadiums and, more lately, his frequent invocations of the Mahdi or the hidden Imam in discussions of the problems in the Iranian economy, have been reprimanded by Qum. Ahmadinejad's constant threats to "reveal" the economic mafia in Iran also implies an unspoken threat to the clerical establishment. Yet in June, when Abbas Palizdar, a civil servant assumed to be close to the administration, explicitly named several notable clerics, including Rafsanjani, as having corruption files on them, Palizdar was immediately arrested and the case fully closed.



Several conjectures have already been made in relation to the 2009 presidential elections. It is clear that Ahmadinejad will not leave quietly. The elections will depend on the alliances made. Rumors have already begun of an alliance between Larijani and the radical right, i.e. for Larijani to stay on as speaker and support Ahmadinejad in his election, thus acting as a counterpoint to Ahmadinejad in government. Another hypothesis is the opposite: it is for Larijani to run against Ahmadinejad. Yet another possibility would be for the centrist reformists and the traditional (pragmatic) right to combine their support and nominate a candidate together. Ahmadinejad himself has stated that he only sees one competitor: Mohammad Khatami, his reformist predecessor as president.

With several possibilities, and no clear outcome as of yet, one must ask if a change in president will really have an effect on the current direction of Iranian politics. One participant argued that three events had converged to make for a more radical Iran since 2005:

- the emergence of a more ideological leadership, President (and Majles in 2004);
- the oil windfall and spare resources, which facilitate the funding of clients groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah;
- and a permissive regional environment, a weakened Iraq and a US entangled in Iraq and Afghanistan, giving Iran both defensive and offensive reasons to step up its activities in the region.

The nuclear programme and Iran's support for Hezbollah predate the arrival of an ideological government, but the way in which Iran's interests have been defined and pursued owes much to the convergence of all three factors. Similarly, Iran's quest for influence in Iraq is not a radical departure for Iranian policy, but the way it has been pursued is very much linked to the conditions sketched earlier, creating incentives, resources and an environment conducive to the exercise of its spoiling strategies. Iran seeking a greater regional role would inevitably run up against GCC sensitivities, but how those sensitivities are treated and the GCC wooed and engaged (versus confronted and menaced) makes the difference between an Iran seen to be dangerous and an Iran only potentially so. Latterly, it has been a policy of arrogance that has emanated from Iran, in contrast to that under Khatami 1997-2005.

One of the neglected factors in the region is the level of trade between Iran and the GCC countries, which has become more important to Iran in the face of sanctions imposed by the US. The volume of trade has been increasing steadily since 1998, though the level of imports from the GCC is much higher than the level of exports to the GCC. Bilateral trade between Iran and GCC rose \$8.7 billion in 2007, with a \$5.7 billion surplus in GCC's favour. In general, the Middle Eastern countries prefer to trade with industrialised countries than with each other. The imposition of sanctions on Iran, however, has changed the dynamics of trade between Iran and GCC. In order to dilute the impact of the US sanctions, Iran has expanded its trade with GCC countries. Iran is expanding its trade relations with GCC countries to discourage them from cooperating with the US sanctions against Iran and providing support to a potential US military strike against Iran. As part of this strategy, Iran is trying to increase its natural gas export to GCC countries.

However, the US-sponsored financial sanctions have imposed some difficulties on Iran-GCC trade. Several GCC banks in UAE and Bahrain have cut back on their dealings with Iranian entities. Their refusal to open lines of credit has already had an adverse effect on UAE exports to Iran. Some Asian countries are also now refusing to deal with Iran. These factors may lead to a decline in trade, despite Iran's record high oil revenues. Iran continues to try and improve its relationship with the GCC countries nonetheless. In tourism and investment, the United Arab Emirates has become a very attractive destination. Iranian investors are purchasing large quantities of real estate in Dubai, and a growing number of Iranians are also working in the UAE. The number of Iranian students in UAE universities has also sharply increased in recent years. The interconnections are growing between Iran and the GCC, which increases the pressure on the latter from the US. The GCC countries are thus caught between competing pressures from the US and Iran. As the European sanctions against Iran intensify, Iran will become more dependent on imports from GCC to bypass these sanctions. The United States is well aware of this development and is likely to put more pressure on GCC countries for restriction of trade with Iran.

After eight years of war with Saddam Hussein, and the tense relationship with the West, Iran has a need to look to its defence. Iran's perception of itself as an important power, and the West's understanding of this, are

central to the debate. Iran threat perceptions do not focus on the GCC states. Iran claims to feel threatened by the US and feels that the US has not forsworn the policy of 'regime change.' Iranians, who remain very nationalistic, believe in Iran, but do not agree on how, or whether, the regime should evolve (and what its priorities should be), and what kind of foreign policy would best shield the country from attack, while advancing the national interests in broad terms. Iranians are simultaneously pragmatic when they have to be and ideological when they can be. Iran is a key player in the region, and wants the respect and status that goes



with this. Perhaps it is through this strong nationalism that the US could formulate over time a strategic reconciliation based on common interests. In Iraq, it will be impossible for the US to achieve its aims without some form of relationship with Iran. A more normal relationship would also help in relation to Afghanistan. It would not necessarily be threatening to other states in the region, but could focus on common interests and, over time, go from there.

As noted, in the event of the emergence of a nuclear-capable Iran, the issue of a nuclear umbrella for Saudi Arabia and the other US allies in the Middle East comes to the fore. Will the US offer this option, and how can it make it credible? Extended deterrence, to be credible, may need a larger rather than smaller regional presence. The GCC smaller powers have US bases, and assume that US protection in such an event would be automatic. The US guarantee would be against a nuclear attack, in addition to a conventional contingency. But the problem may lie in the diplomatic “shadow effects” of an Iranian nuclear capability, not in its actual use. For maximum effectiveness, the US guarantee will need to be explicit and credible. The US would have no choice but to leave Iran without ambiguity regarding the consequences of threatening or using nuclear weapons.

Currently, hope still lies in the sanctions. For any well-designed sanctions to be effective, the US will need international support. Russia would have to be brought on board, to stop supplying Iran with uranium for Bushire and accept stronger sanctions in the Security Council. Some argued that the most recent proposal from the E3+3 countries² shows a clear lack of understanding of the situation. First, this is because the US is not prepared to give Iran security guarantees. Others noted that Iranian officials have said that Iran does not need, nor has it asked for, security guarantees. Second, some said, asking for cessation of enrichment is unrealistic as a precondition for talks. The only effective way to proceed would be to open negotiations with a limited deadline, and get both sides to clearly state their conditions. The US needs to clarify its objectives. Some flexibility on the preconditions for diplomacy might

² The joint letter signed by the Foreign Ministers of the UK, US, China, France, Germany and Russia and handed over to the Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki by the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, Javier Solana, on Saturday 14 June 2008.

make it easier to achieve a suspension of enrichment; there is need for a balance between toughness and space for face-saving and compromise. (Here it is worth noting that, while “unconditional talks” are acceptable, “unconditional negotiations” are not, since this would be contrary to four UNSC resolutions).³ Coercive diplomacy is undermined when its aim is undetermined. Does the US really wish to change the Iranian regime or just its behaviour? In 2003, Iran was in a much weaker position, and was prepared to negotiate. Today, Iran is much stronger and more confident and will not, especially without a clear sense of the benefits. Together with the diplomatic uncertainties, it is unclear at what point Iran will achieve a full enrichment capability and, indeed, what its ultimate aims are. Will it cross the threshold and remain nuclear capable without the assembly of a weapon or weaponisation (or testing)? Or will it cross from a virtual to a real capability and perhaps test, finally and decisively, openly flouting the NPT? One cannot know the answer to this, because the Iranians themselves are probably unclear about it.

The question remains as to whether there is a different path for Iran to take as a society. A slight hope remains in considering that the sanctions already imposed may have begun to have adverse effects. Discussing sanctions is, in itself, an act of treason in Iran. Perhaps that can be seen as an indicator that the situation is becoming more serious. Trading patterns have changed. The economic mismanagement of Iran, for which Ahmadinejad, rightly, is taking the heat, is a politically charged issue. If sanctions powerful enough to affect the cost/benefit calculus of the leadership can be introduced, it may empower those in Iran eager reconsider Iran’s course and to open a dialogue. It will take two for a dialogue and after Bush, the likely obstacle is likely to be Tehran not Washington. However there is plenty of time between mid-2008 and spring 2009 for some surprises from Washington and Tehran.

3 The UNSC resolutions tie any negotiations to a precondition of Iranian suspension of enrichment.

CONCLUSIONS

Several central themes have run through this conference:

The growing interconnection between problems in the region, making a purely national focus inadequate. This gives the region a common security connection, in that everything has an impact on everything else.

- Though the sectarian context is not a sufficient explanation on its own, it is now a part of any regional analysis.
- The refugee issue is increasing in salience, with refugees going from Iraq to Syria, Jordan, the Gulf, and from Palestine into Egypt. Many use false passports, and it is difficult as a result to establish the percentage of Sunni and Shi'a refugees, a potentially explosive problem should sectarian conflict break out. Moreover, quite apart from the important impact on political balances within host countries, with the rise in food prices, these levels of migration are likely to place enormous pressure on host nations and lead to a series of new concerns.
- There is the issue of transnational forces: Al Qaeda was briefly mentioned in this analysis, but terrorism as a transnational force and its impact on the region bears watching.
- A pertinent example of the interconnectedness in the region is the growth of particular alliances with neighbouring countries, e.g. Hezbollah in Lebanon with Iran.

- Old alliances have come to an end and new alliances are being forged. The Syrian, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian alliance of old has become one between Syria and Iran. Turkey is looking more at its immediate neighbours. This has many implications for all countries involved, in relation to when and how these new allies look to each other, and in what it means for Saudi Arabia and Egypt, who are left behind. Russia is also reviving its interest in the Middle East and this, along with the potentially increasing role of India and China, could lead to a very different geopolitical map.

Uncertainty in relation to conflicts:

- The conflict between Israel and Palestine affects the entire region. Weakening support for, and the dubious prospects for a viable two-state solution to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is a serious setback. Discussion of what the Palestinians want now is quite important. If they cannot be clear on this, very little, if anything, can be achieved, and they are unlikely to be supported. It is important to see what both sides are able to deliver now and in the future. Though the one-state solution is now being readdressed by Palestine, it is clearly a dead-end and could be fatal for any prospective peace efforts.
- Iraq's future remains unclear. The US needs to prioritise its aims. With the onset of a new administration, the US should clarify its plans to withdraw, and analyse what it will mean in terms of the development of institutions, the army and Iraq's relationship with its neighbours, all of which are necessary for stability.
- Also critical and unclear is Iran's future: its nuclear aims, and the resulting effects of this on the other countries in the region, including the prospects for further proliferation.

The sense of fragmentation as a result of the weakening of states has facilitated **the emergence of 'bottom-up' or 'micro' politics** in Lebanon, Israel (Arabs), and the Kurds in Northern Iraq and Turkey. The idea that competition within sub-national groups will create more democratic politics in the region is worth considering. Though this may occur within countries, regionally, the Middle Eastern states cannot yet generate their own stability. Therefore, in the absence of an alternative

external power, the US will continue to play the major role, but whether it is able to do so constructively, or even will wish to do so, will depend on the cost and the results achieved.

While there is a **continuing need for the US** in the Middle East, with its responsibilities in Iraq and interests in Israel, and the spillover of these into the region where other interests compel attention (e.g. energy security, non-proliferation) the disconnection between what an outside power needs to do and the presidential cycles of the US government (and short-termism that goes with it) is a major handicap. Reinventing the world with/for each new administration is a recipe for chaos, as the past eight years have amply demonstrated. Domestically, policy needs a bipartisan approach, and continuity if the US is to be seen as serious and dependable. It needs to admit the threat of asymmetrical warfare, and involve all of the relevant government departments, along with different agencies such as NATO and the EU. Externally, the US needs a better understanding of local conditions as to what is possible/desirable. What is tactical to the US is strategic to the local players. In Iraq, the US must avoid seeing its role as a protecting state and avoid the 'politics of the protectorate.' The US may have to accept sharing influence with different regional states. The US needs a long-term vision of a cooperative structure in which the international community also has a say, and which includes the involvement of China, India and possibly Russia.

The confusion between transactional and transformational policies. Before 2001, the US embedded its policies in international institutions to make it more acceptable and less threatening to others.⁴ After 9/11, the US shucked off these institutions as encumbrances and adopted a more direct approach trying to transform its external environment. The US thus vacillated between the idea of changing a state's conduct and changing the regime itself. The idea which emerged was that a state's conduct is derived from the nature of its regime, leading to a constantly mixed message in the cases of Iraq and Iran. Was the problem Saddam Hussein's behaviour or his regime as such? There are

⁴ As promulgated in the Ikenberry thesis. Please see G. John Ikenberry. 2007. Grand Strategy as Liberal Order Building. <http://www.princeton.edu/~gji3/Ikenberry-Grand-Strategy-as-Liberal-Order-Building-2007-word.pdf>

practical problems of priority as well. The US cannot stabilize Iraq while simultaneously trying to destabilize Iran and Syria. The US needs to shed its transformational goals, and open a regional diplomatic channel. But to do this, the new US administration must clarify its goals, and then articulate them.

Throughout the conference, the idea of “**wildcards**,” unpredictable events which could change the dynamics of the region, were discussed. The price of oil is unquestionably an unpredictable factor for the region, and in addition there are several others:

- The potential collapse of Egypt and Iraq. In Egypt, as already discussed, there is a strong potential for a domestic crisis with rising food prices, inflation, the increasing dissatisfaction with the state, especially in relation to the succession of President Mubarak. Despite the weakening of Egypt’s role in recent times, if this domestic crisis worsens, it could have considerable reverberating effects throughout the region. Iraq is still extremely fragile and, though certain improvements have been made, the fragmentation of politics confirms the weak position of the centralised government. The regional elections in October may serve to create a stronger central government, not just dominated by Shi’a membership. However, if the election results are not accepted by all, then this could mark the beginning of a descent into political chaos.
- The concern over climate change is increasing and the only credible alternative energy source that currently exists is nuclear power. This raises issues of safety, proliferation, and the conditions that would be needed for suppliers.
- One of the major effects of climate change, which we are already experiencing, is the shortage of water. The two areas that will be the first to be really affected by this shortage will be Maghreb and the Middle East. In considering the migration patterns and movement of refugees due to the instability of the Middle East, this has the potential to become very serious.
- Regardless of the uncertainty surrounding what the future holds for the Middle East, one thing is certain. We are living a transitional period. In the past, outside powers dealt with one leader, who

assumed control over all coercive parts of the states (the security state). This was easier, to a certain extent, though the West bemoaned the lack of democracy. Now, the West is regretting the weakness of states and the often too-lively, local and unpredictable politics. Iraq and Lebanon appear to be losing control, but perhaps because a different political culture is emerging. It may be unpredictable but need not necessarily be unwelcome.



THE 9TH GCSP/RAND/ CROWN CENTER/GRC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE MIDDLE EAST 2008
GSTAAD, 20-23 JUNE 2008

Programme

Friday, 20 June 2008

Arrival of Participants

18h00 *Aperitif at the Hotel Arc-en-Ciel*

19h30 *Welcoming Dinner at the Grand Park Hotel*

Saturday, 21 June 2008

09h30-09h45 Welcome and Introduction to the Conference
Ambassador David AARON, Director, Center for
Middle East Public Policy, RAND
Prof. Shai FELDMAN, Director, Crown Center for
Middle East Studies, Brandeis University
Dr. Shahram CHUBIN, Director of Studies, GCSP
Mr. Abdulaziz SAGER, Chairman, Gulf Research
Center, Dubai

09h45-11h30 Geopolitical and Regional Dynamics: an
Overview
Chair: Dr. Geoffrey KEMP, Director, Regional
Strategic Programs, The Nixon Center,
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Edward MORTIMER, Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer, Salzburg Global Seminar, Salzburg

Dr. Samir ALTAQI, Director, Orient Center for Studies, Damascus

Dr. Ibrahim KARAWAN, Director, Middle East Center, University of Utah, Salt Lake City

11h30-12h00

Coffee Break

12h00-13h00

General Discussion

13h00-16h00

Buffet Lunch followed by break

16h00-17h30

Arab-Israeli Conflict

Chair: Ambassador Robert HUNTER, Senior Advisor, RAND

Prof. Shai FELDMAN, Director, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University

Dr. Ahmad KHALIDI, Senior Associate Member, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford

Lebanon

Dr. Farid EL KHAZEN, Professor of Political Science, American University of Beirut

Turkey

Dr. Henri J. BARKEY, Bernard L. and Bertha F. Cohen Professor and Chair of the International Relations Department, Lehigh University, Bethlehem

Dr. Steve LARRABEE, Distinguished Chair in European Security, Center for Middle East Public Policy, RAND

17h30-18h00

Coffee Break

18h00-19h00

General Discussion

19h30

Dinner at the Hotel Alpenland

Sunday, 22 June 2008

- 08h30-10h00 Iraq
Chair: Ambassador David AARON, Director, Center for Middle East Public Policy, RAND
Dr. Charles TRIPP, Professor of Politics with reference to the Middle East, School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), London
Prof. Sami ZUBAIDA, Emeritus Professor of Politics and Sociology, University of London, School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College, London
Dr. Terrence KELLY, Senior Researcher, RAND
- 10h00-10h30 *Coffee Break*
- 10h30-11h30 General Discussion
- 11h30-13h00 *Buffet Lunch followed by a break*
- 13h00-14h30 Iran and the Gulf (GCC and oil)
Chair: Mr. Abdulaziz SAGER, Chairman, Gulf Research Centre, Dubai
Dr. Naghmeh SOHRABI, Assistant Director for Research, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University
Dr. Nader HABIBI, Henry J. Leir Chair in the Economics of the Middle East, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University
Dr. Gregory GAUSE, III, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, University of Vermont, Burlington
- 14h30-15h00 *Coffee Break*
- 15h00-16h00 General Discussion
- 16h00-17h00 Concluding Remarks
Chair: Ms. Ellen LAIPSON, President and CEO, The Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Thérèse DELPECH, Director of Strategic Affairs, Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique (CEA), Paris

Dr. Robert LITWAK, Director, Division of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.

Ambassador Fred TANNER, Director, GCSP

19h00

Concluding Informal Dinner at Restaurant Rialto

Resource Persons

Dr. Shahram CHUBIN, Director of Studies, GCSP
Mr. Arnold LUETHOLD, Senior Fellow, Research, Head of Middle East and North Africa Programme, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva

Dr. Giacomo LUCIANI, Director, The Gulf Institute (Geneva) and Professorial Lecturer, SAIS Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center

Rapporteur

Ms. Siobhan MARTIN, Course Coordinator, International Training Course in Security Policy, GCSP

Participants

Ambassador David AARON, Director, Center for Middle East Public Policy, RAND

Dr. Samir ALTAQI, Director, Orient Center for Studies, Damascus

Sir Tom ARNOLD, Former Senior Leader, Conservative Party in the United Kingdom

Dr. Henri J. BARKEY, Bernard L. and Bertha F. Cohen Professor and Chair of the International Relations Department, Lehigh University, Bethlehem

Ms. Kristina CHERNIAHIVSKY, Associate Director, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University

Dr. Shahram CHUBIN, Director of Studies, GCSP

Dr. Thérèse DELPECH, Director of Strategic Affairs, Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (CEA), Paris

Prof. Shai FELDMAN, Director, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University

Dr. Gregory GAUSE, III, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, University of Vermont, Burlington

Dr. Nader HABIBI, Henry J. Leir Chair in the Economics of the Middle East, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University

Ambassador Robert HUNTER, Senior Advisor, RAND

Dr. Ibrahim KARAWAN, Director, Middle East Center, University of Utah, Salt Lake City

Dr. Terrence KELLY, Senior Researcher, RAND

Dr. Geoffrey KEMP, Director, Regional Strategic Programs, The Nixon Center, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Ahmad KHALIDI, Senior Associate Member, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford

Dr. Farid EL KHAZEN, Chairman of Political Studies & Public Administration, American University of Beirut

Ms. Ellen LAIPSON, President and CEO, The Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Steve LARRABEE, International Security Analyst, Center for Middle East Public Policy, RAND

Dr. Robert LITWAK, Director, Division of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Giacomo LUCIANI, Director, The Gulf Institute (Geneva) and Professorial Lecturer, SAIS Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center

Mr. Arnold LUETHOLD, Senior Fellow, Research, Head of Middle East and North Africa Programme, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva

Ms. Siobhan MARTIN, Course Coordinator, International Training Course in Security Policy, GCSP

Mr. Edward MORTIMER, Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer, Salzburg Global Seminar, Salzburg

Mr. Abdulaziz SAGER, Chairman, Gulf Research Centre, Dubai

Ms. Katya SHADRINA, Short Courses Coordinator, GCSP

Dr. Naghmeh SOHRABI, Assistant Director for Research, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University

Ambassador Fred TANNER, Director, GCSP

Dr. Charles TRIPP, Head of Department, School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), London

Prof. Sami ZUBAIDA, Emeritus Professor of Politics and Sociology, University of London, School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College, London

GCSP
avenue de la Paix 7bis
P.O. Box 1295
CH- 1211 Geneva 1
T +41 22 906 16 00
F +41 22 906 16 49
info@gcsp.ch
www.gcsp.ch



Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik