



## *“Persian Gold”*

### **Twenty-second Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum Examines Iran’s Impact on U.S. Regional Interests**

–EXERCISE SUMMARY–

**July 17, 2007:** Senior Executive Branch officials from the Departments of Defense and State as well as the National Intelligence Council were joined by ten Members of Congress for an in-depth discussion of the strategic objectives of the U.S. and its international partners vis-à-vis Iran. Exercise *Persian Gold*, hosted by the Strategic Policy Forum (SPF), helped participants explore a range of potential policy options aimed at mitigating or countering Iranian actions that could adversely impact U.S. and international interests in the Middle East and Eurasia. *Persian Gold* was conducted at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C.



**LtGen Frances C. Wilson, President NDU, welcomes Hon. Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to exercise *Persian Gold*.**



**Hon. Robert Wilkie, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, closed the exercise.**

The Honorable Christopher “Ryan” Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy,

represented the Secretary of Defense, and opened the exercise. Mr. Henry stressed that the value of these Strategic Policy Forums to the Department of Defense is in the interaction that is promoted between the Executive and Legislative branches. He noted a number of factors that have to be weighed in shaping U.S. strategy vis-à-vis Iran and expressed hope that the Members of Congress would gain a better understanding of the multifaceted challenges facing the Department of Defense and its interagency partners in dealing with this issue.

Over the course of the exercise, participants were asked to consider how the U.S. might respond to an increasingly intransigent Islamic Republic of Iran. As the notional scenario unfolded, various U.S. interests and regional objectives were affected by Iran’s domestic and regional activities, underscoring the need for the international community to unite to counter nuclear proliferation and state-sponsorship of terrorism, and to identify novel approaches for dealing with Iran.



**Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Dr. Thomas Mahnken, and Maj Gen Steve Goldfein discuss the exercise.**

In the plenary discussion following the exercise, one of the Congressional attendees remarked that *Persian Gold* was one of the best exercises to date. “I feel like I can use this information today,” said the Member, praising the realistic scenario and the insightful input of participating subject matter experts. The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, was the senior DoD official participating in the exercise. He closed the morning’s events on behalf of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, emphasizing the current and historical utility of gaming critical national security issues. He also expressed Secretary Gate’s desire to make the SPF exercises available to state Governors, due to their growing involvement in the national security arena.

This was the second *Persian Gold* exercise and the fourth SPF exercise of 2007. SPF’s crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of the Department of Defense, are designed to provide senior government officials insights into the complex world of policymaking in the current global security environment. The total number of Congressional visits to these exercises now stands at 200, with 133 Members of Congress attending at least one exercise. For further information, please contact Col Chris Goggins, USAF, Director SPF, at (202) 685-4827, or by e-mail at [gogginsc@ndu.edu](mailto:gogginsc@ndu.edu); or Dr. Margaret McCown at (202) 685-2855 or [mccownm@ndu.edu](mailto:mccownm@ndu.edu).

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