



“Persian Gold”

SPF Holds Eighteenth Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum

~ Exercise Summary ~

The Institute for National Strategic Studies’ (INSS) National Strategic Gaming Center (NSGC) conducted *Persian Gold*, a tabletop exercise examining the effect of Iranian actions on U.S. interests in the broader Middle East, at the National Defense University (NDU) on July 18th, 2006. The eighteenth in a series of Strategic Policy Forum events, these crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, are designed to give Members of Congress and senior government officials insights into the complexity of policymaking in the current global security environment. In addition, they serve to illuminate policy and organizational options for enhancing national security and the pursuit of U.S. interests. More than one hundred twenty Members of Congress have participated in Strategic Policy Forum (SPF) events, with many taking part in several exercises.

Lieutenant General Frances Wilson, USMC, President of NDU, welcomed the Members of Congress and Executive Branch officials. The Honorable Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, opened the forum by emphasizing the value of SPF exercises to the Secretary of Defense and stressing the importance of dialogue between Executive and Legislative branches in addressing the complex security threats confronting our nation.

Ten Members of the House of Representatives and one Senator participated in this forum along with representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the National Intelligence Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the National Defense University. These officials were present to offer Members insights on current policies, plans, capabilities, and analysis, as well as to assess scenario developments during the exercise.



NDU President LtGen Frances Wilson and Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Ryan Henry discuss *Persian Gold*. LtGen Wilson introduced Secretary Henry, who provided opening remarks to the exercise.



Persian Gold provided a forum for information exchange and collaborative decision-making in the context of a postulated international crisis. Participants examined the gravity, complexity, and difficulty inherent in responding to Iranian actions and their impact on U.S. interests in the Middle East. The exercise examined the strategic objectives of the U.S. and its international partners vis-à-vis Iran and how to advance these shared objectives amidst these partners' differing priorities and an increasingly provocative Iran.

Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI) participates in *Persian Gold*.

Immediately following the exercise, Members of Congress shared their insights and policy recommendations with one another in a "hotwash" session, led by Col Chris Goggins, Director of the Strategic Policy Forum. Participants noted that *Persian Gold* afforded them a better understanding of the implications of various Iranian activities for U.S. security interests in the region; the international and regional implications of a nuclear Iran; the adverse effect Iran can have on global energy markets; and the challenge inherent in formulating U.S. policy toward Iran, particularly in crafting measures to constrain Iran's nuclear ambitions and preserve the multilateral nonproliferation regime. Members of Congress noted that the exercise highlighted the need to maintain and improve cooperation and coordination among the United States, its allies, and other regional and global partners in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The Honorable Thomas O'Connell, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, and Mr. Gordon Gray, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs closed the Forum. Overall, the participants found the exercise to be a very valuable experience.

Additional Information:

Persian Gold concludes this year's cycle of Strategic Policy Forums at NDU; next year's schedule will be posted to our website in early autumn. We are pleased to announce, however, our inaugural off-site exercise, a revised version of our avian influenza game, Global Tempest. This will be conducted at the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawaii in December 2006!

For further information, please contact Col Chris Goggins, USAF, Director, Strategic Policy Forum, at (202) 685-4827, or by email at gogginsc@ndu.edu or Dr. Margaret McCown at (202) 685-2855 or mccownm@ndu.edu.

You may also consult our webpage for new information on upcoming events by going to <http://www.ndu.edu/INSS/SPF>.