

The Greater

JFQ last profiled the Greater Middle East in Autumn 1995. The articles found in that issue reflected both confidence and caution. They highlighted the increasing capabilities of the United States to play a positive role within the region, especially militarily. Some articles reflected concern over future threats with emphasis on transnational terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

In the span of a few years the dynamics of the region have changed markedly. The potential for everything from a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace accord to the spread of nuclear weapons shifts almost daily. The responsibilities of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) have been expanded to include Central Asia. This change in the area of responsibility (AOR) and the unsettled transformational character of the region are the subject of the JFQ Forum that follows.

These articles also resonate confidence and concern with regard to the Greater Middle East, but they reflect new realities. This forum focuses on the scope of U.S. national interests and capabilities, as well as the current geopolitical factors that will most influence the security environment.

In one of his last interviews, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command, assesses the region and reviews the elements of the CENTCOM theater strategy. Two subsequent

Middle East



Kuwait City.

U.S. Marine Corps (Glenn Holloway)

articles offer insights into the theater strategy from both operational and historical perspectives. Together they demonstrate the importance of cross-regional issues: the CENTCOM mission impacts on U.S. global interests as well as operations in other AORs.

Rounding out the forum are articles on political, economic, and social aspects of the region. Operational concerns can't be circumscribed by lines drawn on a map. Nor can military issues be isolated from political ones. These articles highlight considerations that transcend national, regional, and functional boundaries, addressing the influence of political Islam, relations between Europe and the Middle East, and demands posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons on the Indian subcontinent.

This JFQ Forum suggests that there is increased immediacy for gaining an understanding of the complexities that influence this highly diverse operational environment.

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