

National Defense University
2005 Topical Symposium

Prospects for Security in the Middle East

Wednesday and Thursday, April 20-21, 2005

Location: National Defense University, Marshall Hall (Building 62), Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC

“The Middle East is an area in which the United States has a vital interest. The maintenance of peace in that area, which has so frequently seen disturbances in the past, is of significance to the world as a whole.”

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt,
March 1944

“To promote peace and stability in the broader Middle East, the United States will work with our friends in the region to fight the common threat of terror, while we encourage a higher standard of freedom.”

- George W. Bush,
January 2005

The Middle East, of course, has long played a critical role in U.S. foreign, economic and security policies. We have had a military presence in the Persian Gulf since 1947 and commitments to protect the region from external threat and ensure access to regional oil and sea lanes. We are also committed to preserving the security of the State of Israel and President Bush set as one of his goals the establishment of an independent and democratic Palestinian state alongside a free and democratic Israeli state. The Persian Gulf and surrounding states will remain high on our list of regional interests as long as oil remains the fuel of choice for the world's economies. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, and regime change in Iraq, new and enduring concerns in the region have taken center stage. They include countering ideological support for terrorism, encouraging economic and democratic liberalization, underwriting political stability, and countering further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, new opportunities may be opening that could lead to a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and several countries have taken tentative steps toward more open political processes, including holding elections.

While the U.S. decision to go to war, the consequent occupation of Iraq, and the continuing insurgency have polarized many in the region and the international community, Iraqis are taking their first tentative steps towards establishing democratic rule. President Bush was clear in his State of the Union address of his intentions toward Iraq and what he sees as being at stake for America, “. . . *our commitment remains firm and unchanging. We are standing for the freedom of our Iraqi friends, and freedom in Iraq will make America safer for generations to come.*”

Against this backdrop we are asking practitioners and scholars from the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East to examine the regional security environment across the Middle East region. They will assess U.S. security interests and commitments, the potential for democratic and economic reform, the prospects for continued terrorism, the growth of Islamic extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the future regional security architecture.

PROGRAM

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

0815 - 0925 Registration – Marshall Hall Atrium

0925 - 0935 Administrative remarks, Marshall Hall, Room 155

0935 - 0940 Welcome – Ambassador Johnnie Carson, *Senior Vice President, National Defense University*

0945-1115 Panel 1 – What are U.S. Security Commitments to/in the Region?

- What are our security commitments to the region, implicit or explicit? Is there a difference in how we understand those commitments and how those in the region understand them? How well have we aligned those commitments to match the threat?
- How does the region perceive the threat to its security, what will it demand of the U.S. to honor American commitments to regional security? Given our national interest in maintaining regional security and stability, what will we need and what can we expect from regional governments to do the mission?
- Do we and our regional friends and allies agree on the threat? How should we alter our security commitments to reflect the differences?
- What role should the U.S. military play in the peace process and/or peace keeping?
- What are the regional demands on our resources and how does the U.S. balance those demands with the desire or need to distribute those resources elsewhere? How do we prioritize between competing requirements in different regions?
- What impact does U.S. force presence in the Gulf States have on popular support for the government within those countries?
- How much impact have the war in Iraq, the insurgencies, and the recent election had on the Gulf region? How important is “the Street” (popular opinion) in shaping popular attitudes and official policy towards the U.S.?

Moderator: Dr. Judith Yaphe, *Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies*

Panelists: Ambassador Edward Gnehm, *Shapiro Visiting Professor of International Affairs, The Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University*

RADM John Sigler, USN (Ret), *The Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability, former Director for Plans and Policy, U.S. Central Command*

1120 – 1200 Optional Tour: Historical tour of Fort Lesley J. McNair (Inclement weather alternative: Tours of NDU Library Special Collections – Marshall Hall and Roosevelt Hall (National War College).

1200 – 1330 Luncheon - Marshall Hall, Room 155

Speaker: Honorable Douglas Feith, *Under Secretary of Defense for Policy*

1400 – 1545 Panel 2 – Democratization in the Region

- What does a realistic definition of democracy mean for different countries, given their traditions, political culture and security concerns? How long might it take to evolve?
- What are the public attitudes in the Middle East toward the existing political systems? How do we know? What are the sources of pressure for change?
- What relative values do people in Middle Eastern countries place on ideals – such as democracy, freedom, justice, equality, order, and independence – that may be in tensions with one another as political reform proceeds?
- What are the linkages between economic development and democracy? (Or between economic development and demographics and terrorism?)
- How well are the economies of the Middle East responding to globalization?
- How well are the Middle Eastern countries preparing their workforce for the new economic environment? What progress are they making in educational reform?
- What role do militaries play in the politics of regional states? How does this role vary from country to country?
- How do regional military forces see their roles – defending against external aggression and/or guaranteeing internal stability? To what degree are they equipped to deal with internal and external challenges?
- How well have the countries each aligned their security strategy, force structure and defense economics? Do their plans match the reality of resources?
- To what degree have Arab governments used the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other conflicts as an excuse for limiting a more pluralistic government?
- What is the impact on popular opinion in the region of U.S. statements in support of a Palestinian state and the peaceful co-existence of Israel and Palestine?

Moderator: **Ambassador Marcelle Wahba**, *Professor, National War College, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates*

Panelists: **Dr. F. Gregory Gause, III**, *Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Vermont*

Dr. Jean-Francois Seznec, *Adjunct Professor, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University*

Dr. Nathan Brown, *Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, George Washington University*

Ms. Alina Romanowski, *Director, Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), U.S. Department of State*

1600 – 1730 Panel 3 - Proliferation and Arms Control – Regional Reactions

- To what degree is the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) driven by threat perceptions? What other factors would prompt the regional states to acquire WMD?
- Given their perception of the threats to their security, how do the regional states define their options? Where do they look and/or what may they want to acquire to protect themselves from foreign and internally-based threats? Aside from resources, what are their constraints?
- How well has Pakistan developed the necessary command, control and security measures to reduce weapons proliferation and theft and protect their arsenal?
- What did we learn about our abilities and shortfalls to observe, analyze and assess WMD development and proliferation from our experiences with Pakistan, Libya and Iraq? How

can we apply these lessons to address the development and proliferation of weapons by Iran?

- What is the role for the European Union and other friends and allies in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons and delivery systems?
- What are the chances, that after the U.S. withdraws from Iraq, Iraq may see the acquisition of WMD as a means of protecting against external threats?

Moderator: Dr. John Reichart – *Director, Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction, National Defense University*

Panelists: COL John “Jack” H. Gill, USA (Ret.)

Dr. Robert Litwak, *Director, Division of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center Scholars*

Mr. James A. Russell, *Senior Lecturer, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School*

Thursday, April 21, 2005 – Marshall Hall, Room 155

0830 – 1015 Panel 4 - Terrorism and Extremism

- What are the linkages between extremism and terrorism and how well do we understand them?
- Are we approaching the war on terrorism the right way, are we focusing on the right issues? How do we convince regional governments and populations that our focus and actions are correct, and not a war on Islam?
- What are the roots of extremism and terrorism in the Middle East?
- What impact will the Administration’s policy to promote democracy in the Broader Middle East have on terrorism in the next decade?
- Can and should the U.S. promote moderate and liberal Islamic networks as a counterbalance to the more established networks that support extremism and violence?
- What are the risks of undermining authoritarian but anti-terrorist regimes so that extremists rather than moderates come out ahead?

Moderator: Dr. Joseph Goldberg, *Professor of Political Science, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces*

Panelists: Mr. Joseph McMillan, *Senior Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies*

Dr. Juan R.I. Cole, *Professor of History, University of Michigan*

Dr. Mamoun Fandy, *Senior Fellow in Middle Eastern Studies, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University*

1030 – 1215 Panel 5 – Regional Security Architecture

- Following the war in Iraq and the January elections, what do the Kurds and Arabs of Iraq want? What are the prospects for increased stability in Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey?
- To what extent will Turkey’s desire to join the European Union influence how it addresses the Kurdish issue?
- How do the neighbors and the region view the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran?
- Is there any common threat perception by regional neighbors that would motivate them to seek an alliance to counter that threat?

Moderator: **Dr. Michael D. Yaffe**, *Academic Dean, Near East-South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University*

Panelists: **Dr. Henri J. Barkey**, *Bernard L. and Bertha F. Cohen Professor and Department Chair, Lehigh University*

Dr. Bahman Baktiari, *Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Maine*

Mr. Charles Dunne *Policy Planning Staff, U.S. Department of State*

1300 - 1430 Luncheon – Room 155, Marshall Hall

Speaker: **Dr. Aaron David Miller**, *President, Seeds of Peace*

1500 – 1645 Panel 6 – A Look Ahead: Possible Challenges on the Horizon

- India and China are increasingly dependent upon oil imported from the Middle East. How has this shaped their involvement in the region?
- What are the prospects for their increased security cooperation with Iran, particularly in missile or dual use, WMD-related technologies?
- How does the region view the increased presence of India, China, and others?
- What are the critical internal triggers that could transform Pakistan into an Islamist state?
- Would an Islamist Pakistan necessarily portend the proliferation of nuclear weapons or Islamic extremists?
- What role would an Islamist Pakistan play in regional security and what if any external alliances would it seek?
- What constitutes a successful outcome for Iraq? Will Iraq's neighbors view success in the same manner as the U.S. or Iraq itself?
- Can an economically and militarily strong, democratically ruled Iraq establish itself as a reliable regional security partner? What issues will be the toughest to resolve?
- Should Iraq fail to stabilize and develop economically and politically, what are the consequences for U.S. regional interests?

Moderator: **Mr. Joseph McMillan**, *Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies*

Panelists: **Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr.**, *President, Middle East Policy Council*
Ambassador Husain Haqqani, *Visiting Scholar, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

Dr. Judith Yaphe, *Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies*