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***European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council Relations and Security Issues:
Broadening the Horizon***

directed by

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Workshop abstract

The relationship between the member states of the European Union (EU) and those of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is multifaceted and has over the years taken on a number of increasing dimensions. In light of recent security issues such as those related to terrorism and the US-led invasion of Iraq and its aftermath, ties between the EU and the GCC have also taken on a security component that up to this stage remains largely undefined and understudied. Yet, with the emergence of the European Security Strategy in December 2003 and other initiatives such as NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative unveiled in 2004, Europe itself is trying to define more concretely what a future European security role in the Gulf region could look like and to what degree Europe can assist the Gulf States from overcoming their perennial security problem. This debate features a number of salient issues including weapons trade and proliferation, terrorism, bi-lateral as well as multi-lateral security approaches to the region and the promotion of the soft security realm as a means to move towards a more comprehensive notion of the term security itself. This conference will bring together experts and analysts from Europe, the GCC States and "interested" other countries to illuminate the problem areas that Europe faces in the Gulf and to put the different approaches on the table into their proper context. Of specific concern will be how to move from the current still vague and largely theoretical notions of GCC-EU security cooperation into more policy-applicable and relevant

approaches that build on past European experiences. The papers presented at the workshop will be published in an edited volume following the workshop's conclusion.

Workshop description

While EU-GCC relations have largely been defined by economic and trade ties, the perpetuation of a security dilemma in the Gulf region has necessitated a differentiation in thinking from European policy-circles. Following over a quarter-century in which the Gulf region has experienced numerous and continuous threats to its stability – beginning with the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War from 1980-1988, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and subsequent liberation of Kuwait by a US-led coalition in 1991, the US policy of dual containment in the 1990s which featured periodic skirmishes with both Iran and Iraq, to the events of September 11th and the subsequent war on terrorism and finally the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the removal of Saddam Hussein from power – it has become increasingly evident that continuing on the present path of security inter-relationships among impacted actors will not resolve the dilemmas faced by the region and instead lead to a continuation of the crisis cycle. Over this entire period of time, for example, the regional states - Iran, Iraq and the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - have failed to develop a sufficient vision of a more durable Gulf security system and have made little substantive progress towards establishing an effective and constructive dialogue with one another.

This is not to suggest that such a further crisis scenario is inevitable. In light of recent developments such as those related to terrorism and the US-led invasion of Iraq and its aftermath, ties between the EU and the GCC have taken on a security component. Specific evidence from the European side include the European Security Strategy issued in December 2003, the final report of the EU's Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East of June 2004 which specifically mentions the need for "strengthening the EU's capacity within the Gulf area" and other initiatives such as NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative unveiled in 2004 which seeks to develop bilateral security relationship with the individual GCC States. There have also been bi-lateral security arrangement between France and Qatar and Germany and the UAE, for example, and there has been a serious engagement of the European Union within the context of the EU-3 negotiations with Iran over the latter's nuclear program. What is evident in these instances is that Europe is trying to define more concretely what a future European security role in the Gulf region could look like and to what degree Europe can assist the Gulf States from overcoming their perennial security problem.

While the security aspect has gained some credence in policy circles, it remains a field that is largely undefined and particularly understudied from an academic perspective. This is partly due to the fact that the security term as such remains very narrowly defined and applied within those boundaries fails to address many of those aspects wherein an European role would be both possible and substantially promising. In addition, there is a lack of a comparative approach to look the development of the relationship between the GCC and the EU and how this relates to the security parameter. The workshop will therefore highlight the lack of a theoretical approach to the subject matter, seek to gain more empirical insight into various aspects of the European approach to the region from a security-based perspective, provide a comparative context into which it becomes possible to frame a more solid base for understanding European policy in the region, and through the use of case example illustrate how the present cooperation can be expanded and improved upon. It all of these instances it

will be important to bring together different perspectives from within Europe and the Gulf in order to enlarge the debate and identify existing insufficiencies.

Structure

The workshop should be divided among certain thematic issues that all contribute to a more thorough understanding of the security component in GCC-EU relations. One part will consider the concept of regional security proposals and to look at European experiences and how they relate to the region. This should be approached from both a theoretical as well as a comparative perspective. So far, the Europe has attempted to launch a number of cooperative policies in the region based on its own model of constructive engagement and regional integration efforts. However, these approaches have failed to materialize into concrete actions and much of the discussion has never left the theoretical realm. In terms of the security component, the workshop will frame such interactions within the larger international relations field and see where in relations to such terms as state power, sovereignty and its subsidiary concepts, the relationship stands or whether more recent concepts including interdependence and regionalism (as developed by Keohane and Nye, or Holsti) hold greater explanatory power.

A second part will take an institutional foundation as its point of departure and look more in-depth at the issues of high level of regional interdependence, a strong complementarity and a mutual dependency between the Gulf and Europe. Fundamental to this discussion will be the nature and objectives of the organizations themselves with the bottom line being that the GCC as a regional organisation does not match the EU in its objectives and institutions. As a result, the process and dynamics of integration itself has had an impact on the development of the security component. In turn, this reflects very much the existence of what Christopher Hill has defined as the ‘capability-expectations gap’ where Europe’s economic role has not been matched by its corresponding presence on the international scene. The same ‘capability-expectations gap’ can be said to exist in the Gulf-Europe relationship thereby leaving potentials unfulfilled and policy initiatives lacking substance. Whether this is something that is only limited to the security sector or whether it is also manifest in other aspects of the relationships thereby indicative of a larger problematic needs to be explored.

A third part would look at aspects of security cooperation from a single-issue point of view such as weapons proliferations, arms trade, terrorism, bilateral security agreements and soft security arrangements. The key here is to provide case study examples that will highlight successes and shortcomings as well as provide evidence for specific theoretical approaches to the subject matter.

Finally, the workshop will try to define a proper framework in which to evaluate the Gulf-Europe relationship outside of its limited empirical dimensions which have not reflected the many aspects and levels of human interaction including economics and politics in which the relations have their basis. The bi-lateral vs. multilateral component will allow for a better analysis of foreign policy decision-making processes and thus try to identify current trends in the overall framework. Specific questions that should be considered in the context of this and which could be handled by individual papers include the following: Is there a role for outside actors such as the European Union (EU) member states to play in bringing about such a new security arrangement and, if so, what are the options and alternatives available? Does Europe has the collective will to tackle the issue of Gulf security and if so, whether it will be possible to put forth a unified EU strategy for the region? What are the specific aspects on which a European security role in the Gulf should be based on? What does Europe have to offer that other regions do not?

Directors' individual paper abstracts

Is Europe a Model for Gulf Security Co-operation? A Look into Processes and Development

Christian Koch

The EU both as an institution and in light of its historical development has often been identified as having possible model character for the Gulf region, specifically as far as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is concerned. In essence, it is the ideal of the European model, its ability to unite a continent, to improve its defenses, to increasingly make its voice heard as an international actor and the movement towards the eradication of war that make the EU experiment a case example to follow, not only as far as the Gulf is concerned but for other regions of the globe as well.

This research will look at the questions in more detail beginning with how Europe has reached its present stage of development and institutionalization. At the bottom, there is question of how and why nations choose to form European institutions and willingly give up critical aspects of their national sovereignty and who or what determines the actual speed and shape of the integration process. The point of departure for this paper is the notion that in principle there is no reason why other regions of the globe, the Gulf region included, cannot follow a similar process to that of Europe as at the bottom there is little exclusivity in terms of the European experience or its community value. Yet, it is also the case that the European example cannot simply be transferred to other cultural regions in an unqualified sense and that it is insufficient to try to transfer structures and to imitate legal texts. Thus, this paper will take a comparative look at the historical development of the Gulf region and highlight similarities as well as differences in the integration movement with the purpose to highlight those aspects that might apply to the Gulf region and those that might not. Specific attention will be focused on the period following the Helsinki process of the 1970s and the ability of Europe over time to bridge the divide within the continent ultimately leading to the expansion of the European Union across to 25 members. Is that a type of security structure that can work in the Gulf region or are there preconditions to consider that would prevent from such approach being applicable to the Gulf? In terms of a more structured security environment what is the more appropriate model - the EU, NATO or the OSCE? Is it a combination or maybe none of these institutional mechanisms find their applicability as far as the challenges being faced by the Gulf region.

The Search for an Optimal Gulf Security Regime

Saleh Al-Mani

This paper attempts to address the major outlines and optimal framework for a Gulf Security Regime, from the perspective of Gulf Cooperation Council member states. Various schemes have been tabled, most of which center on continued US responsibility for the security of this region, or partial responsibility (the so-called over the horizon presence), other researchers have advanced the notion of burden-sharing.

The paper will outline the history of Gulf security, from Pax Britannica in the early sixties, to the Two Pillars approach of late sixties, early seventies, to the balance of power approach of the 1970's and

eighties, to the containment policies of the 1990's, leading to the current situation of full fledged presence of US troops in most GCC countries and in Iraq.

Some argue that the current deployment of US troops in the region has revisited the region with a new regime of Pax Americana, others argue that the US cannot afford to continue to be the main arbiter of security in this volatile region. The disastrous result of the Iraq experience has urged rethinking and re-evaluation of the situation in the United States. Some argue of a return to the old and tested policy of over the horizon presence, others speak of burden sharing as a preferable scheme. NATO has also tabled, through its Istanbul Initiative as a warming-up of ties to GCC countries, but many argue that such cooperation will only be limited to partial training and joint exercises, and will shy away from active engagement and full protection. A multilateral EU approach has also been advocated to be a possible alternative.

The paper argues that the GCC states are well advised to continue their current path of bilateral strategic and security cooperation with the US and individual European countries. Such an approach has been tested and proved its utility on many critical occasions. GCC experience with regional organizations in the economic field, such as the EU, with its twenty-five member states, makes any attempt to rest its security with such organizations highly futile.