SECURITY MODELS
AND THEIR APPLICABILITY TO THE GULF:
THE POTENTIAL OF EUROPEAN LESSONS APPLIED

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Abstract

The paper, written for a joint project of the Gulf Research Center in Dubai and the Bertelsmann Foundation, explores whether the lessons from the transformation of Europe from a conflict formation into a security community could be transferred to the Persian Gulf region. It records and analyses the European experience with "security models" actually applied such as balance-of-power, nuclear deterrence, arms control and confidence-building, democratic peace, regional integration etc. as well as various alternative models such as common security and defensive restructuring of the armed forces. It further analyses the structure and dynamics of the Persian Gulf region, finding few of the European models to be really applicable. It concludes with outlining two different scenarios for the development of the region after the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

1. Preface

Until quite recently, Europe was one of the least secure places in the world. Just remember the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars and the two world wars of the 20th century—the latter even featuring history's worst genocide, the Holocaust. Since then, however, things have improved considerably.

Not only has the Cold War period (ca. 1947-1989) been described by some as a "long peace",[1] albeit one built on a non-negligible risk of mutual annihilation through nuclear conflagration—hence, according to others, not really deserving the label of peace.[2] Most of Europe has also gradually been transformed into a more benign "security community", defined by the term's inventor, Karl Deutsch, as a group of states "where there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way," roughly synonymous with what others have called a "zone of peace".[3] Even though parts of Europe have remained outside this community, the very fact that it has emerged between historical arch-enemies such as Germany and France, and subsequently seems to have grown to encompass most of Europe, is surely significant. At the very least it seems to have falsified the gloomy predictions of IR Realists and others of perennial strife and war between states.[4]

To explore whether the lessons from this transformation of Europe from a conflict formation[5] into a security community could be transferred (*mutatis mutandis*, of course) to other parts of the world such as the Gulf region is the topic of the present paper, taking Europe as a sort of laboratory and the Gulf region as the field of potential application. An introductory, short and strictly theoretical and abstract taxonomy of security models is followed by, first, an attempted "distillation" of the lessons from the European experience and, second, by a short comparison of this region with that of the Gulf as a prelude to the actual analysis of the various security models with regard to their applicability. Neither for Europe nor for the Gulf region have I limited the analysis to security models actually adopted, but various alternatives have also been taken into account. Throughout the paper I have chosen the neutral term "the Gulf" for what is usually referred to as the Persian Gulf region, but which the Arab states prefer to call the Arabian Gulf and the Americans label Southwest Asia.

2. Security Models in the European Laboratory

In principle, the end of security is attainable by many different means—depending also on what is meant by "security." Even though it would certainly be warranted to first address the question who or what should be secure (the incumbent regime, the state as such, societal groups such as nations or stateless ethnic groups, or individuals) from what or whom,[6] I shall bypass this issue on this occasion[7] and focus exclusively on what is usually (and, strictly speaking, inappropriately) termed "national security", i.e. the security of states against threats from other states.

2.1 SECURITY STRATEGIES AND MODELS

In principle, when faced with perceived threats from other states, states have the options set out in Table 1, which distinguishes between unilateral action ("self-help") and multilateral action in the sense of joining up with others. The latter may be subdivided into alignment and collective action, the former referring to the teaming up with a group of states and the latter to the resort to whatever universal (regional or global) means may be at hand. The choices states, as the units of international politics, make in this respect determine the structure and the various institutions of the system—which, of course, also define the options available to states. I shall use the term "security models" to both the unit and the systems level, i.e. as a generic term encompassing both strategies and structures.

Table 1: Security Models					
Unit Level: National Security Strategies					
	Unilateral action		**Multilateral Action**		
Military means	Security-through-Strength		Alignment		Collective security "Humanitarian Intervention"
	Offensive Strength	Defensive Strength	Against power	Against threats	
Non-military means	Diplomacy Neutrality, Accommodation		Containment Trade		Arbitration
Systems Level: Structure and Institutions					
	Anarchy		**International Society**		**World Order**
Military means	Balance-of Power		Alliances Confidence-building Arms control Security regimes		Collective security Peacekeeping
	Parity	Mutual Defensive Superiority			
Non-military means	Common security		Cooperative Security Institutionalisation		International Law "Democratic Peace" Integration

There is a certain correlation between an analyst's theoretical points of departure and his or her preferred options. I shall commence with the options recommended by IR Realists (and to some

extent the "English School") and proceed to those advanced by liberalists and neoliberal institutionalists, elaborating a bit on the implications of the various options and providing European examples.

A system based exclusively on national self-help will inevitably be anarchical,[8] if only because of the workings of the "security dilemma", implying that a state's pursuit of security generates insecurity for its adversaries, who then respond in ways that make the first state less secure, etc.[9] This will also be the case in a system based on "collective self-help" where states form alliances against each other.[10] The main principle of order in such a system, according to Realism, is the **balance of power**.[11]

An important parameter will be the polarity of the system, i.e. the number of camps or blocks within it, and the degree to which the members are integrated in their respective blocs. The central distinctions are here those between multipolarity, bipolarity and unipolarity, even though strict Realists will dispute the durability of the latter, seeing it as, at most, a transitory stage.[12] Whether the system will become one or the other depends, to a large extent, on whether states are balancing against strength pure and simple (as claimed by Kenneth Waltz) or only against strength combined with presumed hostile intentions, i.e. against threats, as argued by Stephen Walt.[13] How conflictual the system will be depends, to a large extent, on the choices made between the various security models.

2.2 EUROPE DURING THE COLD WAR

During the Cold War, the global system was bipolar and "moderately tight" in the terminology of Morton Kaplan.[14] Most Realists held that this was an eminently stable configuration, as states tended to stay put within their respective (formal or *de facto*) alliances.[15] This global arrangement was mirrored in Europe, where the East-West conflict represented a veritable global "overlay" over the regional "ties of amity and enmity", thereby enhancing predictability.[16] Neutrality was an anomaly, and the actual neutrals and/or non-aligned states were without great impact on the rest of Europe.[17]

The political strategy of the West was all along **containment**, which was basically a defensive strategy intended to protect the status quo, *in casu* by preventing the (presumably inherently expansionist) USSR from overrunning Western Europe. It was initially conceived by George Kennan as a mainly political strategy which should strengthen western societies so as to make communism unattractive to the populations to which the Kremlin and their local allies or agents were appealing.[18] Hence the need for political and economic support as in the Marshall Plan.[19]

However, containment soon became militarised and even nuclearised, i.e. it came to be seen as a matter of preventing a military attack by military means,[20] for which a military alliance in the form of NATO seemed suitable.[21] Whence resulted a rough (and asymmetrical) balance of power between it and the Warsaw Pact which was established in response to the accession of West Germany to the western alliance.[22]

Balance of power is usually understood to mean a rough equality in terms of military power, and the fact that it was thus understood went some way towards explaining the fact that it was not inherently stable, neither in Europe nor globally. On the contrary, at least NATO and the rest of the western side (but perhaps both sides) almost continuously felt inferior and thus vulnerable,[23] whence resulted a permanent arms race[24]—not only in terms of conventional armed forces, but also with regard to those nuclear weapons that IR realists have claimed do not "add up", and which were therefore supposed to be inherently stabilising.[25]

European peace researchers (including the present author) and others during the Cold War proposed an alternative to this seemingly futile (and extremely dangerous) quest for balance-through-parity-and-nuclear deterrence in the form of armed forces that were strictly defensive, i.e. in "**non-offensive defence**," also known as "defensive", "non-provocative" or "confidence-building" defence.[26] Rather than seeking a balance that could be described in the formula $M(a) = M(b)$ (where a and b stand for the opposing sides and "M" for military strength), they suggested a balance resting on "mutual defensive superiority" which could be described in the formula $D(a) > O(b) \ \& \ D(b) > O(a)$, where O and D stand for offensive and defensive strength, respectively.[27] The formula thus described an eminently stable situation where either side would be able to fend off an attack from the respective other. This stand-off was to be brought about by capitalising on what Clausewitz had called "the inherent superiority of the defensive"[28]—not by means of "defensive weapons" (which is a meaningless term) but via a different structure of the armed forces, *inter alia* manifested in a different weapons mix and deployment pattern.[29]

While these ideas met with very little support from the states of the West, to whom the proposals were usually addressed (on the erroneous assumption that the USSR would remain uncompromising in its emphasis on the offensive), in the late 1980s the Gorbachev leadership of the USSR embraced the basic idea.[30] This led to the initiation of the most comprehensive and successful **arms control** negotiations ever, the CFE (Conventional Armed Forces in Europe) negotiations and the resultant treaty of 1990, intended to reduce "capabilities for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action".[31] Whereas most other arms control endeavours of the Cold War had not merely failed, but would probably have been insignificant, even if they had succeeded,[32] the CFE Treaty effectively solved Europe's military security problem—even though,

ironically, this major accomplishment was overshadowed by the simultaneous vanishing of the Eastern bloc, which made the problem itself disappear, thereby making its resolution insignificant.

This concept of mutual defensive superiority was often combined with the political strategy of "**common security**", first promulgated by the Palme Commission in 1982.[33] This could be seen as simply a way of making the best of the military (and especially the nuclear) stand-off, implying that neither side had any chance of prevailing or winning and that both ran a significant risk of perishing in a thermo-nuclear conflagration.[34] Hence, national interest demanded some restraint, entailing a consideration of the security concerns of the respective opponent in an attempt to at least mitigate the security dilemma. While this "minimalistic" version of common security was entirely compatible with the prescripts of IR Realism,[35] the maximalist version was sometimes referred to as "**cooperative security**".[36] Whereas the former called merely for some restraint on the part of states in their unilateral pursuit of national security (i.e. what Robert Jervis aptly labelled a "security regime"),[37] the latter envisaged such actual collaboration as would be dismissed by "Realists" as unrealistic, but regarded as a sensible strategy by IR liberalists.

Collaboration would make sense for these liberalists, even between opponents, because conflicts would almost never be a zero-sum, but most would contained elements of shared interests—also implying that such absolute gains for both sides accruing from collaboration (e.g. in the form of trade) might well weigh heavier than whatever discrepancies there might be with regard to relative gains.[38] Even though **East-West trade** may thus have benefited the technologically and economically inferior communist bloc more than the capitalist West, both sides stood to gain from it (in perfect conformity with the economic teachings of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and their modern disciples) and it did not really matter much who gained the most, because the war-making potential into which the gains could conceivably be transformed would most likely never come into play in an actual war.[39]

Not only could quite a convincing case thus be made for trade between adversaries having neutral effects on their national security, but it was also possible to argue that trade would mitigate the conflict itself. As both sides stood to gain (albeit to different degrees) from the peaceful interaction, both would stand to lose by its disruption as a result of war and therefore have strong incentives to avoid this eventuality.[40] Trade might thus directly promote peace and vice versa, and the same could be said for other forms of interaction, the overall effect of which would be the creation of an actual **interdependency** which would presumably also be peace-promoting.[41]

The latter was in fact the rationale behind the most successful of all European security models, represented by (what is now called) the European Union. At its inception as a modest "European Coal and Steel Community", it had been argued along these lines by one of the "founding fathers", Robert Schuman:

> The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. (...) The pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe (...). The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. [42]

This model of security-through-interdependency pointing forwards to **integration** is probably the main reason why the aforementioned security community has developed in Western Europe, including erstwhile arch-enemies such as Germany and France. Indeed, it has been so eminently successful in solving the problem that it is often forgotten that there ever was one to solve—making the present EU appear superfluous or at least irrelevant for security, at least to the younger generation.[43]

Whereas this is an entirely non-military route to security and peace, it might well be combined with such military safeguards as would be preferred by liberalists, in casu by **collective security** arrangements. While this is, in principle at least, a task for the United Nations, its application to the regional level has also been proposed on several occasions.[44]

2.3 POST-COLD WAR EUROPE

With the dissolution of first the Warsaw Pact and then the USSR in 1989 and 1991, respectively, the security problems of Western Europe were over, and one would have expected an organisation such as NATO to have been simply dismantled—and with the lifting of the "overlay" of the East-West conflict, one might even have expected a re-emergence of such previous conflicts as that between Germany and France or Greece and Turkey. Such predictions (e.g. by John Mearsheimer and other "Realists") were, however, proven wrong,[45] as the aforementioned "long peace" has lasted until the present day[46] and NATO has proven far more resilient than had been portended—both of which phenomena call for an explanation.

That NATO has survived the solution and disappearance of the problem for which it was created may be explained by simple "organisational inertia", implying that organisations prefer finding

new tasks to dismantling themselves. Among the new tasks to which NATO was instrumentalised was what might, for lack of a better term, be called "training" of former eastern bloc members in the civil-military relations befitting a democracy and new military tasks such as peacekeeping. This first took place within the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)[47] and subsequently in the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP), under the auspices of which various (small and low-key) military exercises and other forms of practical cooperation have taken place involving both actual and "wannabe" NATO members as well as self-defined neutrals.[48]

More ominously, NATO has also ventured "out of ara" with operations beyond the previous geographical limits, and into the new field of military **interventionism**, especially in the volatile Balkans. With its ("humanitarian") interventions against Serbia in the conflicts over Bosnia and, even more so, Kosovo,[49] NATO effectively transformed itself from a defensive alliance pledging respect for international law and the supremacy of the UN Security Council into an all-purpose (and mainly offensive) alliance. Even though quite a compelling case can certainly be made for humanitarian interventions in extreme circumstances,[50] defensorates of NATO to the effect that this was the logical behaviour of an alliance that had simply abandoned its geopolitical self-definition in favour of seeing itself as a "community of values" ring rather hollow, at least in the ears of the present author,[51]

A much more convincing case can be made for the importance of the two other main European organisations, i.e. the EU and, to a much lesser extent, the OSCE (Organisations for Security and Cooperation in Europe). The latter is a successor to the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which did make significant contributions to regional peace during the Cold War,[52] *inter alia* by providing the auspices for the signing of various agreements on **confidence-building** measures (CBMs) as well as CSBMs, i.e. confidence *and security*-building measures.[53] After the Cold War, however, attempts (e.g. by Russia) at elevating this organisation (which is, after all, the only true regional organisation for Europe)[54] into the paramount institution in Europe, tasked with **collective security**, were frustrated, mainly by NATO. The OSCE was thus allowed to recede into almost oblivion, and tasked mainly with such low-profile missions as mediation and election monitoring.[55] By performing these tasks, however, it may still make a significant contribution to regional peace and security by way of democratisation.

The old theory of "**democratic peace**" (dating back to Immanuel Kant in 1795)[56] has experienced a remarkable renaissance after 1990.[57] It comes in three main versions.[58]

1. In the "monadic" version it consists of the claim that democratic states are inherently peaceful. Unfortunately however, this is obviously untrue, considering that the United States has launched more wars than any other state in history, and that the Middle East's only democracy, Israel, clearly surpasses even Saddam Hussein's (far from democratic) Iraq in terms of war initiations.

2. The "dyadic" version is *prima facie* more credible as it makes the much less radical claim that democracies do not go to war against each other—but it begs the questions of what to call a war and how high to set the standards for democracy. For instance, if Serbia would qualify as a democracy (albeit surely quite an imperfect one) then the theory would stand falsified by NATO's wars against it.

3. The "strong systemic" version appears rather far removed from the real world, as it envisages a democratic structure for the world,[59] which is hard to define and would be even harder to implement. A "weak systemic" version seems more realistic, according to which the system would be more democratic the more its constituent parts are so. The number of state dyads, between which war would be possible, would simply decline with the spread of democracy.

If the democratic peace theorem holds true, it makes sense for states, including democracies, to democratise their neighbours, preferably by peaceful means but if need be even forcefully. There is little doubt that the European Union is far more important than any other organisation in this respect. By constituting a highly attractive community, to which just about any European state would like to be granted membership, the EU is able to achieve "anticipatory adaptation" by would-be members such as Turkey to its rather demanding standards of democracy and human rights.[60]

3. The Gulf Region until 2003 [61]

We have thus seen that the Europeans in their quest for security, stability and peace relied on a wide variety of security models, some of which were obviously more successful than others. This raises the question whether the best of them can be transposed to other parts of the world such as the Gulf region.[62]

3.1 THE *DRAMATIS PERSONAE*

In the following I have, rather arbitrarily, define "the Gulf Region" as encompassing Iran and Iraq plus the states belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), i.e. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).. As the following analysis will,

hopefully, bring out, all of these states interact with each other in security matters more than they do with other states (except the United States, more on which later), thereby constituting what Barry Buzan has called a regional security complex (RSC), i.e. "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another".[63] Yemen is, of course, part of the picture, but its main security concerns do not seem to relate directly to the Gulf, wherefore I have chosen not to count it as part of the RSC. The RSC thus defined features at least six categories of relevant actors. Firstly, three sets of state actors:

1. Regional great powers, above all Iraq and Iran, but in certain respects also Saudi Arabia.
2. Regional small powers: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE..
3. External powers, above all the United States and, until recently, the Soviet Union. While Russia no longer plays much of a role, some of the other successors to the USSR do, albeit only as peripheral actors. The same is the case, in certain respects, for countries such as Britain and France, India, Turkey, Egypt and Syria.

Secondly, at least three categories of non-state actors have to be taken into account:

4. Substate and "nonstate" collective actors such as ethnic and religious groups (e.g. Kurds[64] and Shi'ites), ruling elites, clans, religious communities and leaders, and the militaries.
5. Regional organizations such as the GCC and the Arab League (*vide infra*)..
6. Global organizations, such as the United Nations and its subsidiaries, including the IAEA, UNSCOM and its successor UNMOVIC as well as economic organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, OPEC and its Arab counterpart, OAPEC.

In order to really comprehend regional dynamics, it might thus be imperative to transcend the "parsimonious" theoretical framework of IR "Realists" in order to look both *inside* states and *beyond* states to international organisations.[65] In the following I shall nevertheless place the focus on the interaction among states.

Stable regional dynamics presuppose states with socio-political cohesion, based on a well-defined "idea" of the state, as well as the appropriate physical basis and institutional expression.[66] Without such solid foundations, states tend to be driven by domestic political agendas such as ethnic or religious conflicts, which often spread to neighbouring states, thereby risking to destabilise the region as a whole.[67] Unfortunately for the stability of the Gulf RSC, however, all its states fall into the category of "weak states": All of them (with the partial exception of Iran) are new states;[68] most of them have religious or ethnic minority problems; most have unresolved

border disputes with their neighbours;[69] and none have come even close to the standards of democracy—with the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein as an extreme example of the opposite.[70] None of them thus possess what might be called "procedural legitimacy". As far as "performance legitimacy" is concerned (which some regard as an alternative source of legitimacy),[71] this may also be in jeopardy, as the "social contract" upon which it has rested is being endangered by two coinciding developments—high birth rates in all countries and stagnating or dwindling oil export revenues.[72] The *Arab Human Development Report* published by the UNDP in 2003 also presents ample evidence to the deficiencies of Arab states in terms of human rights,[73] and the non-Arab states of the region (Iran and Turkey) also leave a lot to be desired as far as democracy and civil liberties are concerned. It would thus be imprudent to count on domestic political stability in any of the region's member states, and more realistic to assume that such domestic instability will affect inter-state relations and thereby regional stability.

During the Cold War, the bipolar rivalry between the two superpowers resulted in a certain involvement by both the United States and the USSR in regional security matters, i.e. a certain "penetration", or "external transformation" in the terminology of Barry Buzan, but not strong enough to count as "overlay". The Soviet Union only had few allies in the region, and the few it had were either too insignificant (South Yemen) or too unreliable (Syria and Iraq) to really count for much.[74] The US nevertheless sought a containment of the Soviet Union through the Baghdad Treaty (1955-58), but the Ba'ath revolution in Iraq effectively ended this and formal alignment was replaced by bilateral relations between the USA and individual states. From the late 1960s through the 1970s, US policy was guided by the so-called "Nixon doctrine", according to which the USA would rely on "subordinate regional hegemons" to uphold regional "order", in which role Iran was cast[75] until the 1979 revolution, when the United States was forced to reconsider this strategy and, once again, plan (under the so-called Carter Doctrine) for direct intervention, e.g. by means of the Rapid Deployment Force, subsequently renamed CENTCOM (Central Command).[76]

During the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, the United States remained officially neutral, yet leaned more to the Iraqi than the Iranian side.[77] The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, however, transformed Iraq into an enemy of the West on par with Iran, in which position it remained until the overthrow of the regime in 2003 (*vide infra*). A corollary thereof was increased Western support for the GCC, whereas Iran was not accepted "back in the fold" by the West, as one might have expected. It remained in the category of "rogues" (subsequently referred to as an "Axis of Evil", also comprising North Korea), which formed the premise of the U.S. strategy of "dual containment" of both Iran and Iraq.[78] As a logical consequence thereof one might have expected a rapprochement between these two former enemies, but this never materialised.

3.2 REGIONAL STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS

The Gulf region is not only anarchic in the sense of having no political authority over and above the states. On a spectrum of "maturity"[79] the Gulf also clearly ranks quite low, inter alia reflecting state weakness.

As a regional system, the Gulf has just entered the "Westphalian stage", where mutual recognition of sovereignty is not yet all-embracing, and it remains a "conflict formation" (*vide supra*) where war is entirely conceivable between states as well as with outsiders—as evidenced by the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait 1990, the UN coalition's war against Iraq in 1991, the U.S.-British campaign against Iraq in 1998 and US air strikes against Iraq (1993, 1996, 1998-2000), Turkish incursions into Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish insurgents, and the Yemen-Saudi Arabian clashes in 1995—culminating in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Even though there are thus no immediate prospects of the region developing from a conflict formation into a security community,[80] the region does exhibit certain patterns of restraint, based on a shared commitment to important values and a certain commitment among states to the survival of all as well as an embryonic institutional framework.

It is difficult to envisage a stable balance of power in the region, which is definitely not unipolar in the sense of having one internal pole. Some new form of bipolarity also seems unlikely, and the new global divide alleged by Huntington and others, pitting "the West against the rest",[81] would rather serve as a unifying factor for the region, which might see harbingers of a new western "crusade" in the US wars against Afghanistan and Iraq and its bellicose rhetoric against Iran and Syria. A genuinely regional bipolarity seems very unlikely, as the region lacks a single over-riding fault-line. While the division between Shi'a and Sunni is salient enough to produce frequent clashes between adherents of the two rival branches of Islam, it is much too weak to serve as a rallying point within either. Moreover, the two groupings are far too intermingled for this division to produce a bipolar pattern among states and much more likely to produce clashes within states.

A tripolar structure might seem more likely, as the region has three obvious poles: Iran, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia, the latter heading a coalition with the smaller Gulf states, in their turn "bandwagoning" with it in a "balance-against-threat" mode,

Table 2: Rank Order	Popu- lation	Wealth	Military power	Friends
Iraq	2	3	*2/3*	*3/1*
Iran	1	2	1	*2/3*
Saudi A.	3	1	*3/2*	*1/2*
Legend: Normal: prior to 2003, *italics:* after 2003				

thereby reinforcing tripolarity.[82] Not only is the balance of power between these three regional great powers "delicate", it is also highly asymmetrical, as set out in Table 2, which also estimates the changes brought about by the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

While temporary alignments of either two of these three powers against the third are conceivable, they will probably prove fragile, as in a "classical" balance-of-power system. Until 2003 Saudi Arabia certainly feared Saddam's Iraq, but not enough to make it align with the enemies of the latter, because Iran was also seen as a threat (albeit of a different nature) and because Syria was too distant as well as too radical and unreliable to count on.[83] Iraq feared Iran and its partial ally Syria[84] as well as

Table 3: Membership of International Organisations	B	In	Iq	K	O	Q	SA	UAE	Others
Arab League	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
GCC	Y	N	N	Y		Y	Y	Y	N
OAPEC	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
OIC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
OPEC	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Legend: B:Bahrain, In: Iran, Iq: Iraq, K: Kuwait, O: Oman, Q: Qatar, SA: Saudi Arabia; UAE: United Arab Emirates; GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council, OAPEC: Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, OIC: Organization of the Islamic Conference, OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries									

Turkey,[85] but was not really an attractive ally for anybody. Iran feared its Arab neighbours and especially Iraq, but it was also on a collision course with Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf States over oil pricing and territorial issues.

In sharp contrast with Europe, institutionalisation in the Gulf region is weak, as there are no organisations which are truly regional in the sense of comprising all states in the region and nobody else, as set out in Table 3. Furthermore, most institutions are too weak to really matter (which is arguably the case of the Arab League)[86], or they do not deal with security matters at all. In principle, of course, security might be attained by indirect means, say by weaving a web of peace-furthering economic and other ties (as in the European Union, *vide supra*). However, neither the record of the region's past nor the prospects for its future are encouraging in this respect, as the national economies of the region are far too similar to be complementary. The main attempt at institutionalised security cooperation is thus the GCC, but rather than seeking to

involve Iran and Iraq, the GCC has (so far) merely sought to deter them, mainly by serving as a vehicle for ensuring US support.[87]

3.3 ALTERNATIVES

While the security situation until 2003 was thus tenuous, it was probably far more stable than commonly assumed. The military balance of power had been changed radically by the Iraqi defeat in the 1991 war and the subsequent sanctions regime;[88] Iran was probably not so much a military threat as one *sui generis*,[89] and its foreign and security policy had undergone a significant "normalisation" since the death of Khomeini;[90] and the GCC countries benefited from the US

Table 4: Possible Stabilisation Measures (-2003)			
	Iraq	**Iran**	**GCC**
Dual Contain-ment	Roll Back (Militarily, economically)	Contain (Economically, militarily)	Support (Militarily)
Alternative Phase 1	Contain (Militarily)	Normalise (Integrate)	Support (Militarily, defensively)
Phase 2	Normalise (Integrate)	Support (Security guarantee)	Support (Security guarantees)
Phase 3	Support (Security guarantee)	Support (Security guarantee)	Support (Security guarantees)
Phase 4	Disregard (Security community, collective security, general security guarantees)		

security guarantees. Rather than embarking on a war against Iraq, it might thus have been possible to further stabilise the situation by a skilful use of diplomacy and arms control, as set out in Table 4, conceived as an alternative to the US dual containment strategy.

The relevant arms control provisions that might have accompanied this political strategy would have had to be asymmetrical in order to properly address the various strengths and weaknesses and with a view to achieving a situation of the aforementioned "mutual defensive superiority". A suggested "package", combining political measures with arms control measured inspired by the European experience is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Arms Control "Package"				
Category	**Iran**	**Iraq**	**GCC**	**USA**
Political	No state terrorism GCC associate member	No territorial claims GCC observer status	No US bases Opening up of GCC	Abandon containment
Military	Non-aggression treaties			Security guarantees
WMD	WMD-Free Zone[91]			Export regulations
Ground forces	Tank reductions	Tank reductions	None	
Air forces	Ceiling on long-range fighter-bombers			
Ballistic Missiles	Prohibition on missiles with range > 100 km			
Navies	Abandonment of submarines	No acquisition of submarines		
C(S)BMs	Regional arms transfer and holdings register No manoeuvres in border areas			No manoeuvres in border areas

4. Navigating Uncharted Waters (2003-)

Whether alternatives such as those sketched above would have worked, we shall never know. For good or bad, the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq heralded a new era in Gulf security policy, the outlines of which remain clouded. The following is therefore inevitably somewhat speculative, but some degree or order is attempted by a subdivision into scenarios, i.e. possible paths into the future.

4.1 THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ

The war lacked both legality and legitimacy,[92] certainly in the eyes of most of the Arab world, and there remains a lingering suspicion that the United States had ulterior (and entirely selfish) motives for the war, mainly to gain control of the world's second-largest known oil reserves.[93] The fact that the *casus belli* formulated by the aggressors was based on untruths (or even lies) did little to enhance the legitimacy of the war. The need for an invasion had been argued three grounds:[94]

1. The primary argument was that Iraq represented a threat to the region (or even the rest of the world) because of its alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction, hence that an invasion was called for to disarm Iraq of its WMDSs. However, we now know that Iraq had no WMDs,[95] hence that it was Saddam Hussein who had been telling the truth, and the United States which had been in the wrong. A slightly different version of the same argument had been that Iraq had failed to comply with the Security Council resolutions (especially UNSCR 687), hence that the invasion was called for in order to ensure compliance. However, the main reason to assume non-compliance was that Iraq had not revealed what it was supposed to possess, based on "evidence" provided by the United States.[96] However, as we now know for sure that Iraq's denials were true and the US allegations untrue, Iraq's compliance may well have been much more satisfactory than previously assumed. In fact it appears that it was the USA and not Iraq who had been misleading the UN Security Council and its inspectors in UNSCOM and UNMOVIC.

2. A secondary argument had been that Iraq was collaborating with terrorists of the al-Qaeda type, hence that the invasion was a means of US self-defence against terrorism. However, all experts on Iraq and/or international terrorism refused to accept this as plausible in the absence of evidence, of which none was presented. It has now been admitted by the US administration that there was no evidence to substantiate the claim of links between Iraq and al-Qaeda.[97]

3. A tertiary argument had been that Iraq would be better off without Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party—with the added benefit that a toppling of the ruler in Baghdad in favour of democratic rule would reverberate throughout the Middle East. In the longer run, the entire Greater Middle East, including the Gulf region was expected to become democratic and therefore (according to the above democratic peace theory) also peaceful.

Even though the third rationale would have been much more convincing had it been made in, say, 1988 when Saddam was waging his war against the Kurdish insurgent (but was a de facto US ally) than fifteen years later and after more than a decade of de facto Kurdish independence, it might still be a goal worth striving for.

Unfortunately, however, the United States seems to have committed just about every possible mistake in its planning for the immediate post-Saddam interregnum period—dismantling with a stroke of a pen the entire security apparatus of the defeated Iraq without having enough forces available (with the right training and equipment) to maintain law and order, thereby producing a protracted period of chaos and lawlessness, lasting until the resent day. Moreover, rather than being greeted by cheering crowds as liberators, the coalition forces were treated as what they were, namely conquerors and occupation forces—predictably producing quite widespread

resistance.[98] What was in actual fact a national liberation movement against foreign aggressors and their domestic agents, however, was conveniently labelled "terrorism" (and some of the methods used by the resistance were indeed such as would be expected of terrorists), thereby apparently providing some *ex post facto* evidence to substantiate the above rationale 2. However, "terrorism" only appeared in Iraq after, and probably mainly as a result of, the war.

By the time of writing in November 2004 the US occupation seemed faced with a dilemma: Either stay and help with Iraqi state-building, but thereby undermining the legitimacy of the Iraqi "government" in the eyes of the population—ore leave with an unresolved security situation that may well preclude the holding of the elections scheduled for January 2005 or necessitate having them take place merely in parts of the country, or at the very least being boycotted by significant segments of the electorate.[99] Eventually, however, it is conceivable that Iraq may hold reasonably free, fair and all-encompassing elections which will produce a parliament representative of the entire people, holding a government accountable which will enjoy a reasonable degree of legitimacy in the whole population combined with actual control over the entire territory.

If this happens, it will surely have significant consequences for the rest of the Gulf region, even though it is less obvious whether these will be positive or negative, seen from a US and western perspective. The latter depends, of course, to a large extent on which political dispensation will result from such free and fair elections, i.e. whether the new government will be democratic, liberal, secular and pro-western or the exact opposite (which is far from a foregone conclusion) and whether it will be willing and able to keep Iraq together. I shall take these two eventualities as my point of departure for sketching two divergent paths into the future.

4.2 OPTIMISTIC AND PESSIMISTIC SCENARIOS

The government brought to power by the hypothetical free and fair elections may be secular, liberal and pro-Western, in which case it will obviously enjoy a considerable good-will with the West, which may manifest itself in economic and other support for the gargantuan task of post-Saddam, post-sanctions and post-war reconstruction—the upholding of law and order being one of the most urgent challenges. If life really improves significantly for the proverbial "man (and not least woman) on the street", liberal attitudes may take root, making a return to Islamism and/or Ba'athism increasingly unlikely. It may also be possible to maintain the unity of the country, e.g. via various power-sharing arrangements which would have to combine elements of (territorial) federalism with (non-territorial) consociationalism[100] in order to accommodate the concerns for the "societal security"[101] of Iraq's three main groups, the Shi'ite-Arab majority, the Sunni-Arab minority and the Kurds.

If this were to be accomplished, the news thereof would surely spread to the rest of the Arab world, and it is quite likely that the populations will demand the same rights from their respective governments as the Iraqis would now be enjoying. It is also just conceivable that the incumbent rulers of the other Arab Gulf states might see no alternative to granting such democratic and human rights—also because they would be under some pressure from the West to do so. It is even conceivable that Iraqi democracy might help tilt the balance in favour of the reformists in neighbouring Iran, in due course perhaps leading to a defeat for the clerics in the Council of Guardians.[102] It is also conceivable that the granting of democratic and minority rights to the Iraqi Kurds[103] might reverberate positively to the three other states of the region hosting a significant Kurdish minority, i.e. Iran, Syria and Turkey, where they might be granted similar rights, which may in turn temper their demands for secession and independent statehood. Should all these hopes be fulfilled, it is conceivable that the entire region would become democratic, secular and liberal, in which case it is quite possible that it would also become pro-western.[104] It is further possible that this would herald an era of democratic peace in the region, which might then become at peace with both itself and its neighbours.

Unfortunately, however, the rosy future represented by the above optimistic scenario may be based on wishful thinking. It seems at least as likely that the government coming out of free and fair elections (in January 2005 or later) may be religiously (Shi'ite) fundamentalist.[105] If so, it might well prefer to align itself with others than the United States and the West, most likely with the rest of the Muslim and/or Arab world—i.e. either with Arab countries such as Jordan, Syria or Saudi Arabia because of Arab national affinities, or with Iran because of the Shi'ite communality. However, it is not self-evident that the Arab states would welcome such an embrace, as they have their own fundamentalist oppositional groupings to contend with. Rather than becoming more liberal and democratic it is thus quite conceivable that the immediate response would be more severe authoritarianism and more widespread infringements on human rights,[106] e.g. in Jordan,[107] Syria[108] and Saudi Arabia[109] and the small Gulf states.

Even if we optimistically assume a gradual democratisation in the sense of holding more and freer elections in these states, it does not logically follow that they would thereby become more liberal, as it is quite possible that this would bring to power undemocratic (and certainly unliberal) groupings, which might well be distinctly anti-western. It is also far from self-evident that such democratisation (as opposed to a predominance of mature and stable democracies) would bring peace.[110] One could well imagine that one of the means to mobilise followers for reasonably free and fair elections would be nationalism (as happened in the Balkans). Such nationalism all too often takes the form of chauvinism accompanied by the conjuring up of enemy images,[111] which

could gradually take on a life of their own and produce deepened hostilities among states and perhaps even lead to war.

5. Conclusion

As neither democracy nor peace thus seem to follow automatically, there will be a need for a robust security architecture for the Gulf region.[112] Robustness does not so much require military strength or a foreign military presence as it calls for legitimacy in the eyes of both states and populations. This might be achieved by bringing into play in the Iraqi transition the United Nations—not as an agent for the present occupying forces, but as the supreme temporary authority—and by enlisting the assistance of organisations such as the Arab League and by clearly launching the GCC on a path towards an expansion that should, in the fullness of time also include both Iraq and Iran.

6. Endnotes

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