

Security Partners: The Evolution of U.S.-Saudi Arabian Military Relations

by

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Abstract

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The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, U.S. policy in the Middle East emphasizes security through collaboration with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The United States and Saudi Arabia have had a long-standing relationship focused on regional stability and shared security interests. The closeness and strength of the U.S.-Saudi relationship stems from a long relationship based on common interests in oil, strategic regional stability, and Saudi security. The United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) to Saudi Arabia remains a foundational part of this relationship, focusing on “training, advising, and assisting” Saudi Arabian defense services. This military relationship remains intact today because of common interests and strategic objectives; however, it was not born overnight. Rather, the relationship required sixty tumultuous years to mature into what it is today. This is the story of that relationship’s evolution.

Security Partners: The Evolution of U.S.-Saudi Arabian Military Relations

On Friday, January 23, 2015, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, who was regarded as a moderate reformist, a stabilizing influence in Saudi Arabia, and an ally of the United States, died.¹ King Abdullah emphasized the need for “security and stability,” regarded the futures of the United States and Saudi Arabia as intertwined, and often declared himself a “loyal ally of the United States.”² Indeed, the two nations have had a long-standing relationship focused on regional stability and shared security interests.³ In a public statement issued immediately following the Arab leader’s death, President Barack Obama paid tribute to King Abdullah, remarking that,

As our countries worked together to confront many challenges, I always valued King Abdullah’s perspective and appreciated our genuine and warm friendship. As a leader, he was always candid and had the courage of his convictions. One of those convictions was his steadfast and passionate belief in the importance of the U.S.-Saudi relationship as a force for stability and security in the Middle East and beyond. The closeness and strength of the partnership between our two countries is part of King Abdullah’s legacy.⁴

The closeness and strength of the U.S.-Saudi relationship stems from a long relationship based on common interests in oil, strategic regional stability, and Saudi security. What follows is the story of that relationship’s evolution.

The current U.S. *National Security Strategy* tenets include building capacity in other nation states to prevent conflict and reaffirming U.S. security commitments to allies and partners.⁵ The closest allies and partners of the United States remain the cornerstone of maintaining “global security and prosperity and uphold[ing] the norms that govern responsible behavior.”⁶ As such, Saudi Arabia continues to remain a strategic U.S. partner and regional ally. As is stated in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, U.S. policy in the Middle East emphasizes security through collaboration with

the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Saudi Arabia. To support this objective, the U.S. Department of Defense places a premium on U.S. military support of, and presence in, Saudi Arabia, amongst other partner nations.⁷

The United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) to Saudi Arabia remains a foundational part of this relationship, focusing on “training, advising, and assisting” Saudi Arabian defense services, under Title 22 of U.S. Code.⁸ The USMTM facilitates Title 10 U.S. Department of Defense activities in Saudi Arabia, performs functions as the Security Cooperation Office (SCO) within the Saudi Ministry of Defense, and remains linked to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA).⁹ The USMTM continues to build the capability and capacity of the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces (SAAF) as a regional stabilizer. Consequently, the “United States’ defense cooperation with the nations of this region has dramatically expanded” over the years.¹⁰ The U.S-Saudi military relationship remains intact today because of common interests and strategic objectives. However, this relationship was not born overnight, but rather, required sixty tumultuous years to mature into what it is today.

Economics

Although the U.S. government played no role in securing the original Saudi oil concession, the story of America’s relationship with Saudi Arabia begins with the black gold commodity. Considered to be of strategic importance during the First World War, oil was essential to the Allied victory over Germany, which, according to oil historian Daniel Yergin, was “in some ways the victory of the truck over the locomotive.”¹¹ Indeed, as was reported before the Special Committee investigating Petroleum Resources, the “military importance of oil in modern war had been demonstrated. Oil supply took on a

vital national defense complexion.”¹² Consequently, U.S. oil companies looked abroad for new oil fields, but were unfortunately met with a virtual British monopoly in the Middle East.¹³ U.S. companies had the choice to either join the exclusive British Iraq Petroleum Club (IPC), or proceed independently. Larger American companies, such as Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum Oil Company (later Mobile), pursued the first option and signed Britain’s Red Line Agreement.¹⁴ The agreement prohibited member companies from undertaking independent exploration or signing oil agreements inside an area circumscribed by a red line drawn around the Persian Gulf—an area which included Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and most of the gulf’s western shores.¹⁵

The Standard Oil Company of California (SoCal), however, elected to operate outside of these lucrative IPC areas and chose to instead pursue Gulf Oil’s Bahraini oil concession. SoCal purchased the concession for \$50,000 and subsequently struck oil in 1932. Since Saudi Arabia had similar geographical properties to Bahrain, SoCal courted King Abdel Aziz bin Rahman al-Faisal al-Saud (known to westerners as King Ibn Saud) for Saudi concessions. Harry St. John Philby, once a member of the British Foreign Office, aided William Lenahan in the SoCal negotiations.¹⁶ On May 29, 1933, SoCal acquired an exclusive sixty-year concession covering most of the eastern half of Saudi Arabia—an area equivalent in size to Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona combined—in return for a portion of future profits and two interest-free loans of roughly \$250,000.¹⁷ Additional supplementary agreements eventually awarded SoCal preferential rights to concessions covering nearly 440,000 square miles, or just-over-half of Saudi Arabia.¹⁸ By the end of 1939, SoCal (later renamed the Californian Arabian Standard Oil

Company, or CASOC) produced nearly 11,000 barrels per day and provided King Ibn Saud with royalties exceeding \$1.5 million.

Saudi Arabian oil proved vital to the Allied war efforts during the Second World War as well as the following years of reconstruction. Cordell Hull, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of state, admitted that the "Near East, in which our government had evinced only a slight interest of a century and a half, became through the demand of WWII a vital area."¹⁹ It was evident to CASOC officials that Saudi Arabia was to become a worldwide producer of oil. Thus, in January 1944, CASOC and Texas Oil renamed their subsidiary the Arab American Company (Aramco) to reflect the Kingdom's "newfound prominence."²⁰ Aramco took the lead in relations with Riyadh, particularly in matters concerning oil, development, and modernization. Following the war's end, Aramco again struck oil in the Ghawar fields southwest of Dhaharan. By 1949 Aramco was producing nearly 477,000 barrels per day—more than five percent of the world's total oil production and nearly 35 percent of all Middle East production.²¹ Consequently, cheap Saudi oil became vital to Europe's reconstruction and the U.S. Marshall Plan.²²

As the Cold War evolved between the United States and the Soviet Union, oil relations with Saudi Arabia became subsumed by broader political and strategic concerns.²³ The United States employed a national strategy designed to contain communism.²⁴ In the Middle East, this manifested in Washington's policy of indirect government involvement—a policy designed to promote an environment "in which private companies could expand their Saudi and other Middle Eastern operations" without interference by U.S. officials.²⁵ This policy aided Aramco, who in 1950 sought

U.S. tax relief when Saudi Arabia re-negotiated a 50-50 profit-sharing arrangement. The U.S. Treasury Department, despite the U.S. State Department's objections, granted an exemption for the profit-sharing from Aramco's tax liability.²⁶ The U.S. government justified the policy as diplomatically necessary to safeguard U.S. access to Saudi's oil and protect Aramco's concessions on the peninsula.²⁷ Consequently, postwar exploitation of Saudi oil was left primarily to private companies.

Nevertheless, oil had become a significant factor in U.S.-Saudi relations and, as David Yergin writes, had become a "commodity intertwined with national strategies and global politics and power."²⁸ Today, Saudi Arabia currently controls 16 percent of the world's oil reserves and is one of the largest exporters in the world. Nearly all Saudi oil and gas operations are still controlled by Aramco, which remains the world's largest oil company in terms of production capacity.²⁹ During the Cold War, the contest for oil between international companies and developing countries was repeated in decolonization stories and nationalist narratives across the region. So great was the concern that Soviet expansion would eventually threaten strategic oil reserves in the Middle East, that the United States adopted an oil-denial policy in the Persian Gulf, seeking to curtail Soviet access to oil producing states and oil markets.³⁰ The 1956 Suez Canal Crisis concerned access to oil and its markets, as well as marking the end of imperial Europe in the Middle East.³¹ The creation of OPEC in 1960 emphasized the strategic concerns in the region and prompted Iraqi scholar Muhammad Jawad al-Abbasi to note that that "the development of oil resources is more a matter of national than of purely economic importance."³² Indeed, such is the case for Saudi Arabia, which is

heavily dependent upon revenues generated from energy export, as oil represents nearly 85 percent of Saudi's total exports.³³

An unexpected surge in oil demand during the 1950s and 1960s was offset by an ever-increasing worldwide production capacity. By the mid-1960s Saudi Arabia was producing 1.64 million barrels per day, a little over 5 percent of the world's total daily oil production, and oil revenue soared to \$414 million per annum.³⁴ It continued to rise at an average nine percent annual growth rate through 1970.³⁵ The oil boom during the 1970s allowed Saudi Arabia, under King Faisal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, to modernize the Kingdom and the Saudi military with five-year economic plans.³⁶ The oil crisis following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, as well as the second oil shock following the Iranian Revolution in 1979, elevated the peripheral Middle Eastern states to international prominence and provoked deep confidence issues in those industrial nations dependent on Middle East oil.³⁷ The oil-glut of the 1980s forced OPEC to enforce price and production discipline, as the glut had highlighted the inability of OPEC, with Saudi Arabia at the helm, to guarantee market stability.³⁸ The 1990 Gulf War was fought over the control and distribution of gulf oil; indeed, the roots of the conflict were specifically about who had access to Kuwaiti oil production.³⁹ In summary, American foreign policy towards Saudi Arabia over the last half-century was "largely aimed at preserving a geopolitical status quo in which American interests in access to oil were secured."⁴⁰

Balance of Power Politics

However, oil alone cannot explain the long history of U.S. interest in maintaining relations with Saudi Arabia. Indeed, U.S. policymakers have repeatedly confirmed the strategic importance of the Middle East. The later years of World War II marked the decline of British influence in the Middle East and the dynamic emergence of the United

States “upon the world scene.”⁴¹ In 1947, U.S. and British officials agreed, that “if a hostile Power secured control of this area, not only would we lose very important resources and facilities, but it would acquire a position of such dominating strategic and economic power that it would be fatal to our security. It is therefore vital that we must retain a firm hold on the Middle East.”⁴² The Central Intelligence Agency reaffirmed this sentiment by declaring the Arab states of “critical importance to the security of the United States.”⁴³ Meanwhile, U.S. government officials surmised the Soviet Union was pursuing a “traditional drive toward the Middle East” and warned “the free world” of “the dangers of Soviet aggression.”⁴⁴ Consequently, Washington set its foreign policy “on the path toward the Truman Doctrine and collective defense.”⁴⁵

During the Cold War, Saudi Arabia figured prominently into U.S. policymakers’ strategic framework as the principal geographical crossroads in the Middle East. Air and sea lanes traversed Saudi’s frontier while airbases in the Kingdom allowed American aircraft to base within striking distance of the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ As such, Saudi Arabia became a bulwark against the Soviet Union. The United States focused on the geographical importance of the Kingdom and the political significance of the King as guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Saudi Arabia became an ideological counterpoint to Soviet Union and communism. King Ibn Saud and his successors feared and hated communism, both because of its expansionistic goals as well as its promotion of atheism and persecution of Muslims.⁴⁸ As such, the U.S. relationship with the Middle East “was important strategically for the United States as a way of signaling to the Soviet Union that in spite of détente, Washington would not abandon its interests in the world.”⁴⁹

On January 5, 1957, before a joint session of Congress, President Eisenhower gravely warned of the Middle East falling under control of the Soviet Union. He then asked Congress for authorization to pledge increased economic and military aid to any Middle Eastern nation willing to acknowledge the threat posed by international communism.⁵⁰ The United States desired the status quo in 1955, preserving the Western-dominated economic and strategic position in the region.⁵¹ The policy also sought to contain the radical Arab nationalism of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and discredit his policy of “positive neutrality.” However, it was these two interests—namely oil and the Soviet threat—that became the cornerstone of the United States’ relationship with Saudi Arabia.⁵²

Although few Arab governments endorsed the Eisenhower Doctrine when it was introduced in the spring of 1957, the doctrine did precipitate the political realignment of the Arab world. I supported an emerging anti-Nasserist camp in a quasi-alliance between the conservative Arab regime of King Saud of Arabia, the Hashemite kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq, the Lebanese pro-Western presidency of Camille Chamoun, and the United States. Washington adopted a series of measures to bolster the Hashemite kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq and, more importantly, to promote King Saud as an Islamic counter-weight to the burgeoning popularity of Nasserism and atheist communism.⁵³

The creation of the Israeli state proved another seminal determinate in the developing U.S.-Saudi Arabian relations. The resultant Arab-Israeli conflict has shaped the evolving relationship. Despite President Roosevelt’s empathy towards Saudi Arabia, the United States, under the leadership of President Harry S. Truman, voted for the partition of Palestine and the creation of the Israeli state on November 30, 1947.

Following the United States' recognition of Israel in May 1948, Saudi foreign minister Prince Faysal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, son of King Abdulaziz and future King of Saudi Arabia, sought to sever Saudi diplomatic relations with the United States.⁵⁴ President Truman, however, had no desire to curtail relations with Saudi Arabia and had hoped King Abdulaziz would use his prestige and influence in the Middle East to help the United States create a peaceful and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁵⁵

To U.S. officials, the Arab-Israeli conflict provided the Soviet Union with a “golden opportunity” to extend its influence in the Middle East. As the United States continued to support Israel, the Arab States threatened to sever relations with Washington. During Lyndon Johnson's presidency, the deepening U.S.-Israeli relationship continued to antagonize Saudi Arabia and the Arab States. The Arab states responded by holding the first Arab Summit in 1964 to oppose the Israeli state and address the Palestine question. However, factionalism belied the notion of a united Arab monolith—rather, “far from unifying Arab ranks, the Israel/Palestine issue played a divisive role in inter-Arab politics.”⁵⁶ The polarizing effects of the Israeli-Arab conflict fueled a climate of suspicion between the Arab States and the United States. The Israeli-Palestinian question has repeatedly challenged Saudi Arabian-U.S. relations, eventually culminating in Saudi Arabia and OPEC levying an oil embargo against the United States following the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Since then, Saudi Arabia has not established trade or liaison relations with Israel; however, the Kingdom endorses U.S. attempts to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.⁵⁷

Diplomatic Relations

Although the United States recognized King Abdullah as the ruler of Hejaz and Nejd in 1931, although, prior to 1942 the United States did not have a resident

diplomatic representative in Saudi Arabia. Rather, the U.S. Minister to Egypt, Bert Fish, served as the non-resident minister to Saudi Arabia.⁵⁸ Diplomats Parker T. Hart and Clarence J. McIntosh established the first official U.S. consul in House No. 1635 on Gazelle Circle, by shoving two desks together in the cramped Aramco living quarters.⁵⁹ The make-shift office was a temporary affair, serving until a permanent consulate could be erected. As McIntosh later recalled, they carefully choose the site for the first U.S. consulate, “about one mile from the Aramco camp and up on a hill overlooking all there is to overlook around Dhahran. We could see the sea, Bahrein, the town of al-Khobar on the sea, the airfield, native camp and the American camp.”⁶⁰ Notably, the site reflected the importance of Aramco in the early diplomatic relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia. M.R. Rutherford, consul from 1949-1952, summarized the relationship by later recalling that, “Aramco was more important to the Kingdom than was its relationship with the U.S. Government. There would have been no reason to have had a consulate in Dhahran, had it not been that Aramco was there.”⁶¹

A turning point in the relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States occurred on February 18, 1943, when the United States declared Saudi Arabia eligible for U.S. Lend-Lease aid.⁶² The declaration was designed to extend Saudi Arabia much needed currency. In a letter to the Lend-Lease administrator, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull explained the strategic justification of the action:

Saudi Arabia lies between the vital Red Sea and Persian Gulf shipping routed and across the direct air route to India and the Far East. The Government of Saudi Arabia has been highly sympathetic to the cause of the United Nations and has accorded United States aircraft the right to fly over certain uninhabited zones of Saudi Arabia....However, the State Department is of the opinion that it will be difficult to obtain additional privileges from the Government of Saudi Arabia unless we are prepared to furnish certain direct assistance to that country.⁶³

Military Assistance

As part of the Lend-Lease program, General Ralph Royce led a U.S. military survey team to Saudi Arabia to begin to ascertain Saudi military needs. This initial survey was soon followed by a more robust advisory mission headed by Colonel Garret B. Shomber in April, 1944.⁶⁴ Although the advisory team was supposed to be a joint U.S.-United Kingdom mission, Anglo-American rivalries caused each ally to send separate teams. Nevertheless, the additional privileges mentioned by Hull materialized in August 1945, when the United States and Saudi Arabia agreed to the construction of an air base at Dhahran. Colonel William A. Eddy, U.S. minister to Saudi Arabia, and Yusef Yassin, acting Saudi foreign minister, through an exchange of notes and memorandums, agreed that the United States would return the air base to Saudi Arabia three years after hostilities against Japan ended.⁶⁵ Along with the construction of the Dhahran airfield, the Lend-Lease program provided nearly \$100 million in U.S. aid to Saudi Arabia by the war's end and made the United States the "dominant western force in Saudi Arabia."⁶⁶

On February 14, 1945, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with King Ibn Saud, aboard the U.S. cruiser *Quincy* on the Great Bitter Lake in the Suez Canal Zone. Returning from the Yalta Conference, where he had met with Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill, President Roosevelt decided to visit the Middle East seeking support from King Ibn Saud in the Palestinian problem.⁶⁷ The significance of the meeting cannot be overemphasized. This was the first occasion the Saudi Arabian King had traveled outside of his newly-formed nation's borders. Furthermore, he had the ear the American president. The king questioned Roosevelt about U.S. reliability following the war and raised concerns that "America will return to its preoccupations in the Western

Hemisphere.”⁶⁸ These concerns, however, were eventually assuaged as American interest in, and aid to, Saudi Arabia grew.

Military Relations

Although Saudi Arabia sent two token battalions, numbering between 400-600 soldiers, to assist Arab forces during the 1948-1950 Arab-Israeli conflict, the Kingdom had virtually no modern military capability.⁶⁹ Rather, in 1947, Saudi Arabia had what constituted little more than an internal security apparatus.⁷⁰ U.S. military analysts estimated the number of Saudi regular troops to number between 7,500 and 10,000.⁷¹ Although King Ibn Saud had reorganized the Saudi Ministry of Defense (MOD) under his twelfth son, Prince Mansour, Saudi Arabia relied on the expertise of a British military mission to develop a lightly mechanized force of 10,000 soldiers. The British mission, however, ultimately failed and was phased out by 1951.⁷² Saudi Arabia lacked trained soldiers who could operate modern equipment as well as the combat and support vehicles necessary for a modern mobile infantry. Saudi Arabia also had no air force or navy. Instead, Aramco provided unofficial support in military and economic planning while the U.S. military operated the airfield at Dhahran, as one of its key air bases in the region, and used the port of Dammam for Navy visits.⁷³

The end of the Arab-Israeli war and increasing tension with the British over territorial disputes led King Ibn Saud to turn to the United States for military assistance in modernizing the Saudi military. In 1949 the King asked the United States for a bilateral security agreement. Although not necessarily interested in a formal treaty, the United States was receptive to negotiating terms for continued access to the Dhahran airfield, which had just recently been returned to the Kingdom.⁷⁴ In signing the agreement, the United States sought both access to Middle Eastern oil as well as to

secure a forward air base for strategic nuclear bombers to counter the growing Soviet threat. Thus, in late 1949, U.S. Air Force (USAF) Major General Richard O’Keefe led a military survey team to Saudi Arabia with instructions to review the Saudi military.⁷⁵

The O’Keefe report produced the first comprehensive plan to build a modern Saudi Arabian military. The report recommended creating, equipping, and training a Saudi Arabian military of 43,000—28,000 combat troops, and 15,000 air force personnel—as a defensive force capable of protecting the oil fields and Dhahran airfield.⁷⁶ The O’Keefe report did not recommend any offensive mechanized military capability. The report eventually resulted in the creation of a military academy in Riyadh, the expansion of Saudi’s two main military training bases, and the development of newer naval installations. The report also led to the Dhahran Airfield Agreement, which granted the United States the use of the Dhahran airfield for another five years in exchange for organizing and training Saudi personnel in the technical operations of the airfield. The Airfield Agreement also directed the United States to, “provide necessary construction which would become the property of the Saudi Arabian government; to furnish weather service, radio communications, and, within its capabilities, rescue and operations for civilian aircraft using the airfield.”⁷⁷ Most importantly, the agreement also stipulated against any infringement on Saudi Arabia’s absolute sovereignty over the airfield.

Correspondingly, on July 18, 1951, the U.S. ambassador and the Saudi foreign minister signed a formal Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA).⁷⁸ The MDAA designated Saudi Arabia eligible to receive arms, equipment, and military assistance from the United States and arranged for the U.S. military to train Saudi personnel.

Pursuant to the MDAA, on November 18, 1951, the Army section, Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to Saudi Arabia activated and established a training center at Taif.⁷⁹ The Army MAAG headquarters eventually moved to Taif in 1953 and created training detachments at Riyadh, Al Kharj, Jidda, and Dammam. In June 1953 an Air Force section of the MAAG activated and established a headquarters at the airport in Jidda.⁸⁰ The MAAG-Saudi Arabia then requested a supplement to the Mutual Defense Agreement to address the status, duties, administration, and conduct of U.S. personnel in Saudi Arabia. The supplement provided for U.S. assistance to the newly formed Saudi Minister of Defense and Aviation and required the Saudi Arabian government to provide U.S. personnel with living quarters and offices staffed secretaries, interpreters, and administrative personnel.⁸¹ Overall, the MDAA allowed the United States to train and equip Saudi military forces to protect Saudi Arabia from the expansion of communism.

In 1957, King Saud, son of the late Abdul Aziz, visited the United States and signed the U.S.-Saudi-Arabian Agreement on April 2d. This agreement further strengthened the Saudi Armed Forces by having the United States augment the existing advisory group and create additional training programs for Air Force and Navy personnel. In exchange for continued use of the Dhahran airfield, the U.S. Corps of Engineers agreed to modernize and augment civil aviation facilities.⁸² Lastly, the agreement re-designated the MAAG as the U.S. Military Training Mission to Saudi Arabia (USMTM).⁸³ The USMTM-Saudi Arabia formally activated on June 27, 1953, and became “the principal instrument of U.S. military relations to Saudi Arabia.”⁸⁴ As stated in the handbook for military personnel assigned to the USMTM, the

Mission...is both military and political, inasmuch as the relationship of its personnel to the Saudi military is a major factor in the continuing development of a sound basis for friendship, understanding, and trust between the Government of Saudi Arabia and the United States.⁸⁵

Members of the USMTM were assigned to Saudi Arabia as advisors and exercised no command authority.

Roughly four months after the creation of the USMTM, King Ibn Saud died and his son, Saud bin Abdul al-Aziz became king. The emerging radical nationalism of Egypt's President Nasser, coupled with Nasser's desire to create a "unified command" with Saudi Arabia, made King Saud's reign a difficult one in terms of U.S.-Saudi relations. A spring 1954 visit by President Nasser to King Saud resulted in an Egyptian military mission to Saudi Arabia. The mission, although ineffective in modernizing the Saudi military, proved a major impediment to U.S.-Saudi relations as King Saud sought to manipulate the United States and Egypt against one another.⁸⁶ Accordingly, Saudi Arabia was not included in the 1955 U.S. and British sponsored defensive Baghdad Pact, between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan.⁸⁷ However, U.S. negotiations for continued use of the Dhahran airfield resulted in Washington entering informal technical discussions with Riyadh. These discussions revolved around Saudi Arabia's acquisition of fighter aircraft, B-26 bombers, and light M-41 tanks. Despite the O'Keefe report's earlier recommendations against Saudi Arabia procuring offensive equipment, Washington agreed to sell Riyadh modern offensive military arms.⁸⁸ However, the subsequent M-41 tank sales to Saudi Arabia were delayed because of anti-Arab rallies in the United States during the 1956 Suez Crisis. During the crisis Saudi Arabia joined an Arab "defensive alliance" in October 1955 against Israel and the United States, because of continued U.S. support of Israel. While the move soured U.S.-Saudi

relations, the end of the 1956 Suez Crisis allowed for reconciliation and improved relations.⁸⁹

During his January 1957 visit to Washington D.C., King Saud formally broke with President Nasser and announced his support for the Eisenhower Doctrine. The resultant Dhahran Airfield Agreement on April 22, 1957, allowed the United States continued access to the airfield in return for \$45 million in U.S. military aid for military training and construction. Additionally, the United States pledged another \$5 million for expansion of the Dhahran Civil Air Terminal and \$20 million for the construction of a pier at Dammam.⁹⁰ The United States also agreed to sell two divisions worth of infantry equipment over a five year period, provide \$50 million in credit, and supply the Saudis with 16 M-47 and M-41 tanks, ten propeller training aircraft, eight T-33 aircraft, and 12 F-86 jet aircraft.⁹¹ Following this agreement, U.S.-Saudi relations stabilized although King Saud came under increasing criticism from the other Arab States over the Dhahran Agreement.⁹²

This criticism, coupled with a shifting military strategy, eventually led the United States to terminate its rights to the Dhahran airfield. As the United States developed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) force, military leaders found they no longer needed forward deployed bomber aircraft overseas. Furthermore, the growing number of Soviet medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) and Soviet medium-range bombers threatened foreign-based U.S. airfields as they were with striking distance of Soviet weapons. This allowed the Kennedy Administration and the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, to conclude the Dhahran airfield was no longer a cost-effective or viable endeavor. The United States

and Saudi Arabia eventually signed an agreement ending U.S. basing at the airfield on March 16, 1961. The U.S. military ceased operations the following year, on April 16, 1962. However, the United States did complete construction of the Dhahran civilian airport terminal.⁹³

The Dhahran airfield closure and withdrawal of U.S. security forces left Saudi Arabia without significant military forces just prior to the outbreak of the Yemeni Civil War on its southern border. The expanding civil war, and the subsequent Egyptian intervention, threatened Saudi Arabia. In response to the escalating war, Saudi leadership questioned King Saud's haphazard reforms and eventually deposed the King in favor of Prince Faisal. On November 2, 1964, King Faisal assumed the throne and began a more thorough military modernization program in partnership with the United States.

The growing security partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia led to long-standing agreements between USMTM, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Saudi government in the form of an Engineering Assistance Agreement (EAA). Signed in June 1965, the EAA led to the U.S. Army Corps constructing three major military installations at Khamis Mushayt, Tabuk, and the King Khalid Military City at Hafr. The EEA also resulted in construction of the Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA) headquarters, the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) headquarters in Riyadh, the Airborne and Physical Training School at Tabuk, the Army Engineer Center, the Signal Center, the Field Artillery School and the Infantry Center. Combined, these projects totaled over \$13,790 million between the years 1965 and 1980.⁹⁴ The majority of these construction programs fell under the purview of the Saudi Arabia Mobility Program (SAMP), to which

the Corps of Engineers had appointed a “Program Manager in coordination with the USMTM.”⁹⁵ SAMP, established in September 1966, oversaw the military modernization assistance the United States had agreed to provide Saudi Arabia. It also coordinated the modern military equipment sales Washington had agreed to sell Saudi Arabia. The Army Corps of Engineers consulted on numerous Saudi projects and, under the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968 and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, assumed greater responsibilities in modernizing the Saudi National Guard, Navy, and Air Force. Meanwhile, the USMTM, while its staff reduced from 240 to 140 personnel, continued to negotiate and coordinate with the Saudi Arabian government so that by 1973, all major Saudi military development programs involving the United States were in place.”⁹⁶

Saudi Arabian Security

Saudi military development programs expanded rapidly through the 1970s as the United States adopted a “Twin Pillar” Policy in the Persian Gulf region.⁹⁷ Part of the Nixon Doctrine, the “Twin Pillar” policy looked to bolster Saudi Arabia and Iran as two regional partners, thereby allowing the American military to reduce its forces in the Middle East. The policy also sought to stabilize the Middle East after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.⁹⁸ A January 1970 study, conducted at the behest of Prince Sultan by U.S. Major General Oswald Leahy, became the guide for Saudi Arabian military modernization as a deterrent to Soviet interests in the region.⁹⁹ The USMTM fielded Training Assistance Field Teams (TAFTs) and grew an air defense plan for Saudi Arabia named Peace Hawk. The program precipitated the sales of 30 more F-5Es (100 more were ordered) and a Northrop contract worth \$1.5 billion.¹⁰⁰ By 1978, Saudi defense spending had increased from \$7.1 billion in 1975 to \$10.2 billion.¹⁰¹

The U.S.-Saudi military relationship during the early 1980s hinged on two Saudi arms requests for F-15 and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft.¹⁰² However the request for such advanced aircraft brought Israeli protests and prompted Congress to question the sales. President Jimmy Carter sought congressional approval by promising fifteen more F-15s to Israel, to “compensate” for the Saudi proposal. The Carter Administration also sought to assure Israel that the sale would not upset the Middle East military balance by assuring that the F-15s being sold to Israel were superior to the aircraft being sold to Riyadh. However, the announcement failed to calm Israel and served only to irritate the Saudis. The U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, John C. West, along with the two Western-educated princes, Bandar bin Sultan and Turki bin Faysal, campaigned vigorously for the sale. After lengthy negotiations, the sale was finally approved on May 15, 1978.¹⁰³ The sale came with the provision that Saudi Arabia would not base the fighters within striking distance of Israel. As with the Peace Hawk program, the F-15 sale generated a Peace Sum program to support the F-15s and their employment. The F-15 sale concluded just as Washington announced plans to sell Saudi Arabia an Air Defense Enhancement Package. The package would include five E-3A AWACS aircraft, AIM-9L air-to-air missiles, and KC-135 air-refueling tankers.

The AWACS sale proved even more controversial than the F-15 sales, although it was a natural outgrowth of the developing Saudi Arabian air defense network. Supporters of the AWACS sale argued that the sale would preposition complementary military equipment in Saudi Arabia’s inventory. They argued that the AWACS were defensive aircraft that would enable U.S. capabilities in the region. Nevertheless, because the sales threatened the U.S.-Israeli relationship, sixty-eight U.S. senators

publically opposed the sale and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin issued a statement condemning the proposed AWACS agreement.¹⁰⁴ On October 14, 1981, the U.S. House of Representatives voted against the AWACS sale, 301 to 111.¹⁰⁵ The next day, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee also voted against the sale nine to eight. Yet, on October 28, the U.S. Senate ultimately supported the sale with a margin of a mere 52 votes.¹⁰⁶

While critics of the sale attribute the Senate's approval to the President Ronald Reagan's personal attentions, in actuality, the deteriorating stability in the Middle East was more the impetus. The Iranian revolution in 1979, the reoccurring hostilities between North and South Yemen, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, all caused the United States to focus on security issues in the Middle East. The United States responded by deploying an aircraft carrier group to the region and a squadron of F-15s to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. Air Force eventually deployed two E-3A AWACS and the U.S. Navy drafted plans to maintain a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean.¹⁰⁷ Although the U.S. military maintained the position that it sought no permanent bases in the region, the development of a surge capacity—in the form of a “rapid deployment joint task force” (RDJTF)—belied the need for access to strategic airfields.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the United States sought increased cooperation with Oman, Kenya, and Somalia.¹⁰⁹ More importantly, however, the United States sought to restore Saudi Arabia's confidence in the United States as a reliable security partner by selling AWACS, Sidewinder and Maverick missiles, laser-guided bombs, and cluster bombs to the Saudi military.¹¹⁰ The State Department endorsed the sales as “militarily justifiable” and the President Carter formally declared that any attempt by forces “to gain control of

the Persian Gulf region [would] be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States, and such an assault [would] be repelled by any means necessary including military force.”¹¹¹

This U.S. commitment only deepened during the 1980s as President Ronald Reagan sought to create a “strategic consensus” among regional states based on direct military sales and projecting an increasing over-the-horizon military capability.¹¹² As the Iran-Iraq war escalated, President Reagan sought to assure Saudi King Fahd that the United States would “use force if necessary to protect oil tankers in the Gulf.”¹¹³ As such, the Reagan administration proposed the sale of 400 hundred basic Stinger missile launchers, 700 missiles, and associated support equipment, for \$141 million.¹¹⁴ However, Congress blocked the sale. As a result, President Reagan invoked Article 36(B)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act and transferred an additional 200 Stinger missiles to Saudi Arabia without seeking Congressional approval.¹¹⁵

The U.S. Congress’ unwillingness to uphold continued arms sales to Saudi Arabia during the Iran-Iraq war, as evidenced by the cancelled Sidewinder missile sales, prompted Riyadh to turn first to Great Britain and then to China.¹¹⁶ In 1985, Saudi Arabia purchased Tornado fighter-jets from Great Britain after the U.S. Congress denied a similar sale of advance fighter aircraft to Riyadh. In March 1988, the *Washington Post* reported that Saudi Arabia had acquired CSS-2 East Wind intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles from China.¹¹⁷ While Riyadh’s oversight in not having informed Washington of the pending sale upset U.S.-Saudi relations, much more egregious was Saudi Arabia’s willingness to turn to a communist country for military equipment. The sale reflected Saudi’s concerns regarding expanding regional threats

and the extent of unqualified U.S. support. Ultimately, however, the CSS-2 sales, proved to have little lasting impact on U.S.-Saudi relations as the President Reagan left Washington and President George Bush's administration was almost immediately confronted with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

On August 3, 1990, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi ambassador to the United States met with Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin L. Powell to request the United States defend Saudi Arabia against a possible invasion by Iraq. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait threatened Saudi Arabia's vast oil resources and threatened the stability of the Gulf region.¹¹⁸ Within six months, the United States deployed more than 500,000 American soldiers under command of the Commander-In-Chief, U.S. Central Command (CINCCENT), General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, to defend Saudi Arabia. Military victory over Iraq rested on the strong relationships between coalition members and the ability of the coalition to remain intact during the conflict.¹¹⁹ U.S.-Saudi military relations had evolved into a fielded coalition army with complimentary command structures designed to ensure stability of the region and the strategic oil resources of the Saudi Arabian peninsula.

Conclusion

Today Saudi Arabia depends on the United States for security, to provide regional stability, and for aspects of its domestic and economic development. The United States relies on Saudi Arabia's oil production to stabilize the world oil market while its military depends on Saudi Arabia to provide military basing and support for U.S. interests in the region.¹²⁰ This relationship of mutual dependence has developed over nearly a century of competing interests, strategic dilemmas, and regional tensions. Saudi Arabia has relied on the United States for military modernization—in terms of the

infrastructure built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the training, equipment, and forces provided through the U.S. Military Training Mission. Despite differences, however, security, stability, and oil have served to make the U.S.-Saudi relationship resilient. As Anthony Cordesman writes, “it is a cliché of diplomacy that nations have no permanent allies, but only permanent interests.” Certainly such is the case when considering U.S.-Saudi relations.

The future of U.S.-Saudi relations must continue to address the common interests of oil, regional stability, and Saudi security. Saudi Arabia, as proven in the past, can certainly use European, Asia, and Arab connections to reduce dependency on the United States and replace U.S. arms and materials. However, Riyadh must consider U.S. power projection as a counter to Iran. The United States must review Arab-Israeli tensions, consider strategic decisions with Saudi Arabia, and continue to improve relations with other Gulf States to ensure regional stability. Friction also endures in the Middle East in the religious differences of the Sunni-Shia divide. However, as history has illustrated, a successful U.S.-Saudi relationship, as part of a strategy to “engage international partners with the capacity to play productive and leading security roles in their respective regions,” can reduce these problems, but cannot eliminate them.¹²¹ Rather, the future of the U.S.-Saudi relations will depend on the strength of their common interests.

Endnotes

¹ “Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Dies,” *BBC News*, January 23, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30945324> (accessed March 3, 2015).

² Ellen Knickmeyer and Ahmed Al Omran, “Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah Dies: Leader Promoted Stability in Face of Democratic and Islamist Movements That Have Roiled Arab World,” *The Wall Street Journal Online*, January 23, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi->

[arabias-king-abdullah-dies-1421969658](#) (accessed March 3, 2015); Flora Drury, Jenny Stanton, and Ollie Gillman, "Saudi Arabia Buries its king: Thousands Gather in Mecca as King Abdullah is Laid to Rest in Riyadh after Losing Battle with Pneumonia," *Daily Mail News*, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2922592/Has-Saudi-Arabia-s-King-Abdullah-died-battle-pneumonia.html> (accessed March 3, 2015).

³ Nevertheless, the United States and Saudi Arabia hold very different—often conflicting—perspectives regarding arms proliferation, U.S. military in Saudi Arabia, Islamist reformist movements, and Arab-Israeli relations.

⁴ Barack Obama, "Statement by the President on the Death of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz," January 22, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/22/statement-president-death-king-abdullah-bin-abdulaziz> (accessed March 3, 2015).

⁵ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, 2012* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2012), 2.

⁸ The United States has been a primary arms supplier to Saudi Arabia. From 1950 to 2006, Saudi Arabia purchased from the United States over \$62.7 billion in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and \$17.1 billion in Foreign Military Construction Services (FMCS). These represent approximately 19 percent of all FMS deliveries and 85 percent of all FMCS deliveries made throughout the world by the United States during this period. The largest single FMS purchase by Saudi Arabia was \$9 billion contract for 72 F-15S fighter aircraft in May 1993 (delivery completed in 1999). Christopher M. Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations*, Congressional Research Service, RL 33533 (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, August 13, 2009), 4.

⁹ *United States Military Training Mission Home Page*, <http://usmtm.org/> (accessed March 3, 2015).

¹⁰ Chuck Hagel, U.S. Secretary of Defense, introductory remarks at the U.S.-GCC Defense Dialogue, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, May 14, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/utility/printitem.aspx?print=http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1847> (accessed February 25, 2015).

¹¹ Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, 2nd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1992), 154.

¹² U.S. Senate, "Hearings Before a Special Committee investigating Petroleum Resources," *American Petroleum Interests in Foreign Countries*, S. Res. 36, 79th Cong., 1st Sess., 1945 (Washington, DC: 1945); as appears in U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Monopoly, "Development of Joint Control over Foreign Oil," in *The International Petroleum Cartel: Staff Report to the Federal Trade Commission*, 83d Cong., 2nd Sess., 1952 (Washington, DC: 1952), <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/Petroleum/ftc3.htm> (accessed March 3, 2015).

¹³ U.S. officials wanted to broaden the United States' oil supply. During the war, nearly 80% of the Allied oil requirements were supplied by Standard Oil of New Jersey. U.S. officials worried that increased energy demands would quickly deplete the company's resources. However, in the Middle East, most oil exploration and discovery was under the purview of British companies. Rachel Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15-17.

¹⁴ An area circumscribed on a map by a "Red Line" encompassing most of the old Ottoman Empire (including Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and adjoining sheikdoms, but excluding Iran, Kuwait, Israel, and Trans-Jordan). Within this area the owners of member oil companies agreed to be interested in oil only through the IPC. Competition among the companies themselves was precluded by retaining the "self-denying" clause. As one writer commented, the Red Line Agreement "...is an outstanding example of a restrictive combination for the control of a large portion of the world's supply by a group of companies which together dominate the world market for this commodity." John M. Blair, *The Control of Oil* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 31-34.

¹⁵ Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 15-17.

¹⁶ Harry St. John Philby served as chief head of the Secret Service for the British Mandate of Palestine until he was forced to resign his post in 1924 over differences in allowing Jewish immigration to Palestine. He became a trusted advisor to Ibn Saud and helped negotiate SOCAL's oil concession. Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, 154; Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 17-19.

¹⁷ U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, "Multinational Oil Corporations and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Report, Together with Individual Views, to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, January 2, 1975), <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/oil1.htm#CH1> (accessed March 3, 2015). Also, Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 14-15.

¹⁸ In November 1933, SoCal reassigned the Saudi concessions to newly created subsidiary, the Californian Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC). Three years later, partly as a result of the IPC actively blocking CASOC from accessing overseas markets, CASOC joined the Texas Oil Company as an equal partner, thereby creating the California Texas Oil Company (CALTEX) as a marketing subsidiary. Between 1933 and 1938, CASOC struggled financially, until March 4, 1938, when the Dammam-7 oil rig "erupted," producing more than 1,585 barrels per day at a depth of 1.5 kilometers. By March 7, 1938, Dammam No. 7 reached 3,690 barrels per day—and continued until the well had produced more than 100,000 barrels. In short order, wells Nos. 2 and 4 were deepened and connected to the same zone. The discovery allowed Saudi Arabia to eventually increase the size of the original CASOC concession to nearly 440,000 square miles, or just-over-half of Saudi Arabia. The addition, signed by the Saudi Minister of Finance 'Abd Allah al-Sulayman al-Hamdani, ultimately prompted the U.S. government to give its Minister to Egypt, Bert Fisher, the additional title of Minister to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Aramco, *Energy to the World: The Story of Saudi Aramco*, Vol. 1 (Houston, TX: Aramco Services Co., 2011), 89.

¹⁹ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), Vol. 2:1498; Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 20.

²⁰ Saudi Aramco, *Energy to the World: The Story of Saudi Aramco*, Vol. 1, "A New Name" inset, 118.

²¹ Bruce R. Kuniholm, "American Oil Interests in the Near East," in *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/Petroleum/kuniholm.htm> (accessed March 3, 2015); U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Monopoly, "Development of Joint Control over Foreign Oil," in *The International Petroleum Cartel: Staff Report to the Federal Trade Commission*, 83d Cong., 2nd Sess., 1952 (Washington, DC: 1952), <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/Petroleum/ftc3.htm> (accessed March 3, 2015).

²² In 1948, the United States imported about six percent of its oil (with only eight percent of that coming from the Middle East), while Western Europe was entirely dependent on Persian Gulf oil. Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), xiii; Michael Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²³ Odd Arne Westad's case studies of the Horn of Africa, southern Africa, Cuba, Vietnam, and the Middle East illuminate the global consequences of the Cold War—not as just an ideological battle between two great world contenders, but a complex and intense struggle between local and global tensions. These interventions, as Westad asserts, had disastrous effects on the Third World countries—both physically and culturally. As an aside, Westad also contends that these Cold War interventions affected the two major superpowers as well; more so, however, the democratic institutions and ideals of the United States. As such, Westad argues that the Cold War interventions and the anti-colonial struggles that erupted in Latin America, Southeastern Asia, northern and southern Africa, and the Middle East were in effect "most often extensions of ideological civil wars, fought with the ferocity that only civil wars can bring forth." Ultimately, these interventions—both U.S. and Soviet—shaped the "international and domestic frameworks within political, social, and cultural changes in the Third World took place" by affecting how locals framed their "conscious responses to the models of development presented." Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

²⁴ John Lewis Gaddis explores the U.S. Cold War strategy of containment from its conceptualization by George Kennan in 1947 to Ronald Reagan's presidency and the subsequent dissolution of Soviet Union. Foremost, Gaddis defines strategy as the process by which "ends are related to means," and policy intentions and objectives correspond to national capabilities and resources. According to Gaddis, Kennan primarily desired a restoration of the international balance of power, a reduction in the international communist movement and a modification of the Soviet concept of international relations to facilitate "the emergence of an international order more favorable to the United States." Kennan argued for the simultaneous application of military, economic, and political power to maintain a balance-of-power and to protect the vital centers of industrial power and raw materials. This balance of power, Kennan recognized, "was ultimately a psychological phenomenon" and that to maintain it only required a "relatively small expenditures of effort, if applied in the right places and in the right manner would suffice." To meet the Soviet challenge, Kennan suggested two tactical ways to preserve global equilibrium and contain the spread of communism: the perimeter defense concept and Kennan's preferred "strongpoint defense" concept. The perimeter defense concept called for resistance to aggression wherever it occurred along the periphery while its alternative, the

“strongpoint defense,” decried a concentration on the defense of just the vital regions rather than on fixed line. Furthermore, Gaddis suggests that there existed two separate versions of containment: symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical containment offered “protection against incremental threats: against the danger that peripheral challenges to the balance of power may [have become] major ones, if not in fact, then psychologically.... It ma[de] available multiple levels of response, affording policy-makers choices wider than those of escalation or humiliation. But it also involve[d] letting adversaries select the nature and location of competition, and that, for the nation on the defensive, require[d] virtually unlimited resources.” Juxtaposed to this, Gaddis argues, was an asymmetrical variant that “recognize[d] the reality of limited resources, and stresse[d] the need to pick and choose the manner of one's response, lest wars in fact be lost while winning battles. It concentrate[d] not so much on a multiplicity of options as on a variety of means, emphasizing the need to act in circumstances, at times, and in ways calculated to apply one's own strengths against adversary weaknesses. It retain[ed], thereby, the initiative, but at the price of yielding positions not easily defended, or of expanding the confrontation to exploit positions that can be.” Asymmetrical containment emphasized one particular method, such as economic sanctions or nuclear weapons, to contain communism. John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁵ David E. Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia: Ambivalent Allies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), 16.

²⁶ This effectively allowed Aramco, by 1953, to completely offset its tax liabilities with tax credits and pay no U.S. federal tax. Thus, for a loss of approximately \$37 million per year in tax revenues, the U.S. government was able to protect an emerging relationship with Saudi Arabia. Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 19-20.

²⁷ Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc. 2005), 8.

²⁸ Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, xv.

²⁹ U.S. Energy Information Administration, “Saudi Arabia: Country Brief,” <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=SA> (accessed March 4, 2015).

³⁰ The oil-denial policy—as signed by President Truman in 1949 as NSC 26/2--not only sought to deny the Soviets access to oil markets and oil fields, but also called for pre-positioning explosives near strategic resources in the event of a Soviet invasion. The explosives were controversial in that some in the administration thought that such preparations would be perceived by Middle East oil states as a lack of U.S. resolve. Shibley Telhami, “The Persian Gulf: Understanding the American oil strategy,” *The Brookings Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 33 <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/Petroleum/ftc3.htm> (accessed March 3, 2015).

³¹ Keith Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East*, Rev. ed. (New York: I.B.Tauris and Co., Ltd., 2011), 8-9. Also, as Steven Z. Freiburger explains, U.S. President Eisenhower faced the dilemma of denying the Soviet Union access to the Middle East oil fields while also opposing colonial legacies, despite a profound Eurocentrism, and accommodating growing Arab nationalism. The dilemma came to crisis in 1956 over ownership of the Suez canal. Steven Z. Freiburger, *Dawn over Suez: The Rise of American Power in the Middle East, 1953-1957* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1992), 39-40.

³² Muhammed Jawad Al-'Abbusi, *Oil in the Arab States*, Trans. by Research and Translation Office (Cairo: Institute of Advanced Arab Studies, 1956); as appears in Saudi Aramco, *Energy to the World: The Story of Saudi Aramco*, Vol. 2 (Houston, TX: Aramco Services Co., 2011), 5.

³³ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Saudi Arabia: Country Brief," Independent Statistics and Analysis webpage, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=SA> (accessed March 4, 2015).

³⁴ Saudi Aramco, *Energy to the World: The Story of Saudi Aramco*, Vol. 2, 5. Total world oil production derived from "Historical Oil Production by Region, 1965 to Present," chart by Chartsbin.com, available at <http://chartsbin.com/view/wyw> (accessed on March 29, 2015).

³⁵ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 94.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 148-186.

³⁷ On October 6, 1973, Syria and Egypt, with support from other Arab nations, attacked Israeli-occupied territories. The renewal of hostilities in the Arab-Israeli conflict prompted U.S. President Richard S. Nixon to initiate operation Nickel Grass, a strategic airlift designed to deliver arms and supplies to Israel. In response to the U.S. aid, OPEC raised the posted oil price by 70 percent, to \$5.11/barrel, on October 16, 1973. The following day, OPEC oil ministers agreed to an oil embargo, a five percent cut in production, and to continue to cut oil production by five percent incrementally, until all their economic and political objectives were met. Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations*, 4.

³⁸ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 29-30.

³⁹ Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, xv.

⁴⁰ F. Gregory Gause III, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 14.

⁴¹ According to Warren Kimball, the United States and Great Britain were not natural allies as each pursued its own national interests and were not fully candid with the other. However, without their cooperation, the war could not have been won. This cooperation was evidenced in the exchange of nearly 1700 wartime messages between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Furthermore, the two leaders met for nine wartime meetings which allowed for a joint grand strategy and established a firm friendship between two men. However, Kimball also proposes that the two leaders failed to adequately plan for the postwar world and thereby allowed the vacuum of leadership in which the atomic bombings and the Cold War would occur. Kimball concludes that while there would always exist an alliance between the two nations, the relationship that developed between the United States and Great Britain, through Roosevelt's and Churchill's friendship, would diminish during the postwar period as each nation competed for a position of strategic leadership. Warren Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1997). See also, Mark Stoler. *Allies in War: Britain and America against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, February 2006). Henry Luce writes that the Twentieth Century was the American Century, for "no narrow definition can be given to the American internationalism of the

20th Century.” Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 23, no. 2 (spring 1999), 11-13.

⁴² U.S.-U.K. agreed minute, October 17, 194, FO 800/476, Records of the Foreign Secretary's Office, Public Record Office (PRO), London; Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, 8.

⁴³ CIA, SR-13, September 27, 1949, PSF, Intelligence File, box 260, HSTL; Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, 8.

⁴⁴ Robert Rossow, Jr., “The Battle of Azerbaijan, 1946,” *Middle East Journal* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1956): 32.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ According to U.S. Minister J. Rives Childs, Saudi Arabia was like “an immense aircraft carrier lying athwart a number of the principal air traffic lanes of the world.” Childs to Marshall, December 27, 1948, CD 6-3-3, Records of the Secretary of Defense, RG 330, National Archives; Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, 8.

⁴⁷ Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 206.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Policy Statement on Saudi Arabia,” *State Department Files, 1945-1949*, XII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 578. See also, US Department of State, paper covering US-Saudi relations, April 11, 1947, *State Dept. Files, 1945-1949*, XII, 372; top-secret letter to Dean Acheson, January 27, 1945, *State Dept. Files, 1945-1949*, I, 33; policy statement on Saudi Arabia, May 18, 1949, *State Dept. Files, 1945-1949*, XII, 578; aide memoir from meeting with King Saud, March 30, 1949, *State Dept. Files, 1945-1949*, XII, 572.

⁴⁹ Accordingly, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union “prompted each to fiercely compete for the support of the Third World.” Consequently, the importance of the Third World, and the bargaining position of small states vis-à-vis the superpowers, increased proportionately with the growing hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union. John P. Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992* (Boulder: Lexington Books, 2002), 20; and Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics, 1955-1967* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), 3.

⁵⁰ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4.

⁵¹ Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 14.

⁵² Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 34.

⁵³ Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations*, 34.

⁵⁴ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 106-107.

⁵⁵ David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 597.

⁵⁶ Gerges. *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 4.

⁵⁷ Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations*, 26.

⁵⁸ The United States formally recognized the regime of King Abd al-Aziz (Ibn Saud) in May, 1931 and, on November 7, 1933, signed a provisional agreement “in regard to diplomatic representation, juridical protection, commerce and navigation,” with Saudi Arabia as the first formal act of diplomatic relations. However, as Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson had already informed Francis Loomis of SoCal, the United States had no plans to establish a formal diplomatic mission, or embassy, or consul in Saudi Arabia. It was not until James S. Moose, Jr., established the first U.S. legion in Jeddah, in the western province of Saudi Arabia, in May, 1942, that the United States established a permanent resident to Saudi Arabia. Moose served as chargé d’affaires ad interim until 1943 when he was finally appointed as the resident U.S. Minister to Saudi Arabia. Colonel William A. Eddy, a retired and decorated U.S. Marine Colonel, replaced Moose in 1944. The first U.S. consuls assigned to reside in Saudi Arabia arrived in mid-August 1944. Consul Parker T. Hart and Vice-Consul Clarence J. McIntosh assumed the responsibilities previously held by Minister Bert Fish. In this way, the United States relegated the official U.S. embassy to western Saudi Arabia and allowed the consul in Dhahran to monitor Aramco and Saudi relations. Eventually, despite Saudi resentment over the creation of Israel in 1948, U.S.-Saudi relations continued to grow as the American Consulate in Dhahran was raised to a Consulate General in 1949 and the American Legation’s in Jidda to an embassy. U.S. Minister J. Rives Childs became the first ambassador to Saudi Arabia on March 18, 1949. Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 101-102, 105, 107; Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America’s Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 21.

⁵⁹ As an aside, camp locals referred to Gazelle Circle as Easter Egg Row because the company tested various paint hues in their ability to withstand the brutal desert climate. Parker T. Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the United States: Birth of a Security Partnership* (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1998), 31-33.

⁶⁰ Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), *Aramco Handbook: Oil and the Middle East*, Rev. ed. (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: Arabian Oil Company, 1969), “U.S. Diplomatic Presence,” inset, 127.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 843.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 34.

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 845.

⁶⁶ Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 92-93.

⁶⁷ Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2007) 467.

⁶⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. 8, “Great Bitter Lake Conversation,” Memorandum of Conversation Between the King of Saudi Arabia, Abdul

Aziz al Saud, and President Roosevelt, February 14, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945).

⁶⁹ The tensions between the United States and Saudi Arabia during the 1948-1950 Arab-Israeli war fortunately did not destroy the nascent U.S.-Saudi relationship. The Anglo-U.S.-French armistice in May 1950, did much to reduce the fissures between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

⁷⁰ Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 95-96.

⁷¹ Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 68.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 94.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 96-97; Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 34-35.

⁷⁵ Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, 68; Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 96-97; Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 34-35.

⁷⁶ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 35.

⁷⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, *United States Military Training Mission: Saudi Arabia* (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: USMTM, 1960), 2-3.

⁷⁸ U.S. Department of State, *United States Treaties, 1951*, Vol. 2, pt. 2 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1951), 1466.

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *United States Military Training Mission: Saudi Arabia* (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: USMTM, 1960), 2.

⁸⁰ At the time, the Saudi Arabian Air Force consisted of 50 officers and airmen and a few obsolete aircraft. There existed no Air Force training program and no administrative functions. U.S. Department of the Army, *United States Military Training Mission: Saudi Arabia* (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: USMTM, 1960), 2.

⁸¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *United States Military Training Mission: Saudi Arabia* (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: USMTM, 1960), 2.

⁸² Robert P. Grathwol and Donita M. Morrhus, *Bricks, Sand, and Marble: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History and Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Army, 2009), 87-89.

⁸³ The term MAAG was an improper designation because it implied a Mutual Aid Program bilateral agreement, which did not exist. Furthermore, the U.S. military program was reimbursable by the Saudi Arabian government. U.S. Department of the Army, *United States Military Training Mission: Saudi Arabia* (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: USMTM, 1960), 3.

⁸⁴ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 35.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, *United States Military Training Mission: Saudi Arabia* (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: USMTM, 1960), 3.

⁸⁶ The Egyptian mission remained in Saudi Arabia until 1957, when King Saud broke with Nasser. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 97.

⁸⁷ Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, 78-79.

⁸⁸ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 36-39.

⁸⁹ The United States opposed Israeli-British-French military action while Saudi Arabia refused to participate in the subsequent Egypt-Israeli war.

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *United States Treaties, 1957*, Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 403; and U.S. Department of State, *Treaties and Other International Acts Series, 1957* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 3790.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*; Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 94-104.

⁹² Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 104.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

⁹⁵ Robert P. Grathwol and Donita M. Morrhus, *Bricks, Sand, and Marble: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History and Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Army, 2009), 264.

⁹⁶ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 42.

⁹⁷ Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 57.

⁹⁸ President Richard Nixon announced the Two Pillar Policy during a meeting with the shah of Iran at the Tehran airport in May 1971. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 57.

⁹⁹ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 54.

¹⁰⁰ Between 1976 and 1980, Northrop's sales to Saudi Arabia averaged \$1.2 billion, between 22 to 44 percent of the prime contractor's total sales. Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 42.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1966-1975 and 1969-1978* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980); Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, tables 6.1 and 6.2, 201 and 204.

¹⁰² Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 60.

¹⁰³ Prince Bandar bin Sultan was the son of the defense minister and Turki bin Faysal, an air force pilot, was the son of the late King Faysal and the head of the Saudi security services.

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Congress, Library of Congress, “Saudi Arabia and the United States: The New Context in an Evolving Relationship” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980), 61.

¹⁰⁵ Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 334.

¹⁰⁶ *Washington Post*, October 29, 1981; as appears in Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia: Ambivalent Allies*, 66.

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Congress, Library of Congress, “Saudi Arabia and the United States: The New Context in an Evolving Relationship” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980), 54; Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, 57.

¹⁰⁹ Only Oman signed a formal military facilities agreement, in June 1980, granting American requests for access to the airbase on Masirah Island. The other Gulf States ignored similar American requests while still granting access to U.S. forces (such as Bahrain). Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, 57.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Bulletin* (March 1980), 83-64; Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 63.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹² Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, 327-328.

¹¹³ Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 63.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Press Guidance,” May 29, 1984; Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia*, 64.

¹¹⁵ Steven Emerson, *The American House of Saud: The Secret Petrodollar Connection* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), 411.

¹¹⁶ Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America’s Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 188-189.

¹¹⁷ John M. Goshko and Don Oberdorfer, “Chinese Sell Saudis Missiles Capable of Covering the Middle East,” *Washington Post*, March 18, 1988.

¹¹⁸ Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America’s Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, 191.

¹¹⁹ The U.S.-Saudi military relationship proved most decisive in that CINCCENT accepted the existing Saudi command structure and, rather than folding it into the existing United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), kept it as a parallel organization. Eventually all Islamic coalition forces were assigned to the command of Saudi Lieutenant General Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz. Ultimately, all decisions regarding Islamic forces required the Saudi Ministry of Defense and Aviation’s (MODA) approval. Consequently, an informal coordination planning group—the coalition coordination, communication, and integration center (C3IC)—developed in Riyadh, closely connecting CINCCENT and the Saudi command. It quickly expanded to include sections in ground, naval, air, logistics, special operations, and intelligence areas. Although it had no command authority, C3IC became vital in streamlining coordination between coalition

forces and allowing Lt. Gen. Khalid to quickly receive, translate, and re-issue CENTCOM orders to Islamic coalition forces. Lt. Gen Khalid although without formal military authority, as a prince of the royal family effectually became Gen Schwarzkopf's counterpart. Mark D. Mandeles, Thomas C. Hone, and Sanford S. Terry, *Managing "Command and Control" in the Persian Gulf War* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 126 and Les Aspin and William Dickinson, *Defense for a New Era: Lessons of the Persian Gulf War* (Washington DC: U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, 1992), 66.

¹²⁰ Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic, and Energy Dimensions* (Washington, DC: Praeger, 2003), 103-104.

¹²¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review, 2014* (Washington, DC: Department of Army, 2014), 6.