

Beyond the Nuclear and Terror Threats: The Conventional Military Balance in the Gulf

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The Persian Gulf is currently in the midst of one of the largest arms races it has ever known. The chief motivation for it is Iran's progress on its nuclear program and the possibility that Arab Gulf states will be in the line of fire in any future conflict. These states' military forces have undergone substantive changes in recent years, mainly improvements in their defensive capabilities, and "on paper" they have acquired certain capabilities to attack Iran.¹ Nevertheless, even massive procurement of weapon systems, no matter how advanced, is no match for Iran's military power and its ability to conduct modern warfare over any length of time. The basic conditions behind this reality include the Gulf states' inferior geo-strategic situations, their domestic constraints, their dependence on foreign manpower, and their difficulty in creating effective security cooperation among themselves.

The Persian Gulf arena has decisive importance for regional and world security, as is patently clear from the events that have befallen it since the Islamic Revolution: several energy crises, three regional wars, outside military intervention, subversion and terror, and several low intensity conflicts, all of which create a state of ongoing crisis. Currently, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman seek to prepare for any possible development regarding the Iranian nuclear program, including use of force against Iranian nuclear facilities or Iran's acquisition of nuclear capability, and the ensuing ramifications of these scenarios. Looking beyond the sub-conventional threats (subversion and terror) and the non-conventional threats (weapons of mass destruction),

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this article focuses on the changes taking place in the military balance in the Gulf and the conventional military threats to the Arab Gulf states, and the connection between the various threats.

Threat Reference: Iran

From Iran's point of view, the Gulf is a main attraction as an area for potential influence, but it is also a major source of threat. Despite the Arab Gulf states' basic weakness, Iran sees them as a not insignificant security risk, mainly because of their ties with the United States and the concrete fear that the US will use bases on their territory to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. Senior Iranian officials in the military and government frequently declare that in such an event, Iran will respond by striking the Gulf states and American interests in those states.² These repeated threats are intended first and foremost to deter the Gulf states from cooperating with the United States, but it may be that they also reflect Iranian operational plans in the Gulf.³ Iran has several military aims therein: to prevent or at least limit the ability of various players to use the Gulf to attack it; to defend the Iranian coast with its refineries and navigation lines; to attempt to undermine American influence and increase the price of any American intervention in the Gulf; to improve Iran's ability to respond if attacked, especially regarding freedom of navigation and oil exports from the Gulf; and to project its strength while sowing fear among its smaller neighbors in order to influence their policies.

A prevalent view in the Gulf is that the United States must be close enough to protect the Gulf states, but far enough so that it does not create problems.

Some time ago the Revolutionary Guards, which in 2007 received overall responsibility for the Gulf, adopted the principles of asymmetric warfare against "soft targets," mainly infrastructure facilities on the Arab Gulf coast, including oil rigs, transport terminals, refineries, ports, and desalination facilities. The tactics of asymmetry are mainly intended to offset the Gulf states' preference for advanced weapon systems. In addition, Iran's difficulty in obtaining weapons and spare parts because of the sanctions it has faced in one form or another since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 has led the Iranian military industry to attempt to acquire the capability to manufacture a variety of offensive weapons. As of today, the main Iranian military threat to the

Gulf states is connected to Iran's clear superiority in surface-to-surface missiles and other asymmetric capabilities, especially maritime ones, which the Gulf states view as tangible and immediate threats, specifically:

- a. **The missile threat.** Today Iran possesses the largest surface-to-surface missile arsenal in the Middle East, estimated at 1,000 missiles with ranges of 150-2,000 km.⁴ Because its air force is weak, Iran is enlarging its ballistic arsenal, gradually but systematically. At the same time, it is increasing the ranges of its missiles and improving their accuracy and destructive force, and it is working to shorten their "exposure time" (by increasing reliance on solid fuel engines, which shortens preparation and launching time). The result is that in the next confrontation, urban centers and strategic facilities in Gulf states will be exposed to more missiles for a longer period of time.⁵ In a rare statement, former Iranian defense minister Ali Shamkhani described Iran's response to the Gulf states: "Iran will launch a missile blitz at the Gulf states...with the missiles aimed not only at American bases in the region, but also at strategic targets like refineries and power stations...The objective will be to stun the American missile defense system using dozens if not hundreds of missiles that will be launched simultaneously at certain targets."⁶
- b. **The naval threat.** For a variety of reasons (mainly the weakness of the regular Iranian navy and America's naval superiority in the Gulf), Iran has given preference to the purchase and building of a large number of small, fast naval vessels (some unmanned) and to the conversion of civilian ships to military purposes. Some of the vessels are armed with anti-ship missiles, some have been fitted with naval mines, and others are full of explosives.⁷ The result is that Iran's naval fleet in the Gulf has taken on the characteristics of a guerrilla force in every sense: mini-submarines for landing commandos and fast ships used for "hit and run" missions using "swarming" tactics, that is, a large number of fast, small boats that attack at the same time. This tactic is intended to "stun" the adversary's defensive systems. In addition, Iran has

Iran's nuclear buildup and the threat to the Gulf states from Iran's asymmetric capabilities in the Gulf and its surface-to-surface missile arsenal are the main catalysts for these states' efforts to increase their military strength.

shore-to-sea missiles on barges, on islands in the Gulf, and along the Iranian coast, as well as a not-insignificant ability to use sea mines, whose main purpose is to interfere with maritime traffic in the Gulf.

The Military Balance in the Gulf⁸

| Category | Iran | Saudi Arabia | Other Gulf States |
|--|--|---|--|
| Territory (km) | 1,647,000 | 2,150,000 | 325,000 |
| Population | 70,000,000 | 25,000,000 | 12,000,000 |
| Investment in defense | 2.5% | 10% | 6.8% (average) |
| Military personnel | 870,000 (including Revolutionary Guards; in addition, there are some 600,000 Basij forces) | 220,000 (not including the establishment of a force of 35,000 soldiers dedicated to protect the oil infrastructure) | 140,000 (there are also 24,000 reserve soldiers in Kuwait) |
| Fighter planes | 237 | 252 | 258 |
| Transport planes | 101 | 57 | 113 |
| Helicopters | 340 | 226 | 304 |
| Coast-to-sea or sea-to-sea missiles | Some 400 (HY-2/C801/802/701) | Otomat/Teseo (unknown number) | MM-40 (unknown number, UAE) |
| Surface-to-surface missiles | Some 1,000 missiles with ranges from 150-2,000 kilometers | (CSS-2) 30-50 | Scud-B (unknown number, UAE) |
| Frigates and corvettes | 90 | 27 | 51 |
| Submarines | 3 (in addition to 5 midget submarines) | None | None |

Source: Middle East Military Forces database, Institute for National Security Studies, 2010

The Gulf states' vulnerability has prompted them to adopt a cautious, measured policy, which includes maintaining as good relations as possible with all sides, including the countries that most threaten them. Thus in recent years, security ties between Iran and Oman have been strengthened, practical security cooperation agreements have been signed between Iran and Qatar, including training and exchange of information, and joint exercises have been held with Kuwait. There have even been reports of limited cooperation with Bahrain – despite the prolonged hostility between the countries – on “soft” security issues like border security and smuggling prevention.⁹

The United States

Gulf security is closely tied to the Arab Gulf states' dependence on outside protection and to the need by foreign actors to have access to the Gulf's economy. As such, the Gulf military balance is integrally linked to the presence of the American forces. Since the Gulf states became independent they have been defense buyers, not suppliers. Their lack of strategic depth, built-in military weakness, and hostile neighbors – in the past Iraq, and now Iran – have caused them to depend more and more on an American military presence for protection. American intervention in the Gulf includes ongoing arms sales; ongoing advance stationing of practice and training equipment; placement of central bases (including the headquarters of the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and the regional headquarters of the American Central Command in Qatar); and even direct military intervention (during the Iran-Iraq War).

Strategic logic is not the only American consideration in the region. The United States also leads the sale of weapons to the Middle East in general, and the Gulf in particular: between 2001 and 2004, it was responsible for 56.1 percent of these deals, and from 2005-2008, for 8.9 percent (followed by Britain with 18.7 percent and Russia with 15.4 percent).¹⁰ These close ties have improved the American defense industry's economic situation and developed the links between the US and Gulf states defense establishments. On the other hand, from a purely military perspective, these ties have also had negative influences, making it difficult for the Gulf states to build a collective military framework (the Gulf Cooperation Council) and causing them to be dependent on foreign forces for the supply, maintenance, and operation of weapon systems.

Gulf rulers are sensitive to every advance placement of military equipment and American soldiers in their territory, especially in the early stages of fighting. This issue has been the subject of critical public opinion, and in several cases in the past, these forces were the targets of terrorist attacks. Therefore, the Gulf states prefer that they be stationed “beyond the horizon,” preferably in the Arabian Sea in the area of the Gulf of Oman. In other words, the United States must be close enough to protect the Gulf states, but far enough so that it does not create problems. The Obama administration, like its predecessors, has pleaded with the Arab Gulf states to strengthen their militaries by purchasing advanced American weapons in order to better confront the threat from Iran.¹¹ In the view of the United States, the strengthening of America’s allies in the region, especially through provision of access to missile protection systems, will help in implementing a deterrence and containment policy against Iran.

New Emphases in Buildup

Of all developing countries, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates spend the largest amounts on weapons purchases: the Saudi defense budget grew from \$24.9 billion in 2001 to \$41.2 billion in 2009, a 65 percent increase, while the defense budget of the UAE jumped 700 percent, from \$1.9 billion to \$15.4 billion. In the same period, Kuwait’s and Bahrain’s defense budgets also skyrocketed by 35 percent and 80 percent, respectively.¹² The assessment is that Saudi Arabia will spend some \$50 billion on advanced weapons in the next two years, while the UAE will spend nearly \$35 billion. They are followed by Oman and Kuwait, with an expected expenditure of up to \$10 billion.¹³

The Arab Gulf states lack the ability to act independently as a counterweight to Iran.

In the past, the main fear of the Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, was a land invasion by Iraqi forces. This prompted the purchase of armor and artillery platforms, as well as helicopters and anti-tank weapons, in order to stop any advance of armored columns. Since the 1991 Gulf War the Arab Gulf states have worked to improve existing systems rather than invest in new technologies, primarily because the war proved that even if they invest in advanced weapon systems, their

security is dependent on the willingness of foreign forces, especially American forces, to protect them.

In the not too distant past the threat faced by the Gulf states has changed, and until recently, their capabilities did not match the threat from Iran. The trends in Gulf states weapons purchases in recent years, however, reflect a preference for advanced weapon systems that better match the enemy's threats and modus operandi, and these have been complemented by increased training and instruction and improved maintenance of the weapons purchased. The massive weapons purchases of recent years, especially missile protection systems, fighter planes, and advanced naval vessels, are intended first and foremost to strengthen the Gulf states' ability to defend their weak point: essential assets, especially oil production, refining, and transport infrastructures, but also desalination facilities (the only source of water in these countries) and military infrastructures.

Iran's nuclear buildup and the threat to the Gulf states from Iran's asymmetric capabilities in the Gulf and its surface-to-surface missile arsenal are the main catalysts for these states' efforts to increase their military strength. (These attempts have not diminished in the wake of the economic crisis and the decline in the price of oil). Several of these states are interested and others are already in the midst of purchasing missile deterrent and defense systems, including Patriot (PAC-3) batteries, while joining the American defensive disposition in the region that includes Aegis ships. In addition, in an unprecedented move, the US Congress last year approved the purchase of advanced missile defense systems (THAAD) by the UAE, which has even expressed interest in purchase of advanced American F-35 fighter planes. Moreover, the buildup is not limited to defensive means. Thus, for example, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have purchased advanced munitions for their fighter planes (including JDAM GPS-guided bombs), while Kuwait and the UAE have ordered fast patrol boats. The scope and type of the purchases, which are clearly driven by the Iranian buildup, are potentially strengthening their ability to maintain aerial and naval superiority in their territories.¹⁴

The strengthening of the Gulf states' military capabilities serves Israel's interests, especially if they adopt a more aggressive stance toward Iran.

In addition to trying to deter aggression by equipping themselves militarily, these acquisitions are also intended to ensure a continued American presence in the Gulf, to show that they are taking action, and to consolidate their rule and strengthen the personal prestige of their rulers (which is also part of the competition between these states, i.e., “mine is bigger and more advanced than yours”). Although the likelihood that these states will change their defensive orientation is small, there are certain trends, some of them new, in their current approach to national security, against the background of what is seen as a growing threat from Iran.

1. More cooperation.

- a. *Joint military force*: In late 2009, the Gulf states declared their intention to reestablish a rapid intervention force on the ruins of the “Peninsula Shield,” the joint military force that was de-facto disbanded in 2006. This step, they say, was intended to create a rapid and flexible intervention force with headquarters in Riyadh, with the troops remaining in their home countries until called during an emergency. Despite its previous weakness (at the height of its power, the force had about 5,000 soldiers, and only rarely was it completely staffed), it can be credited with some relative successes, including the establishment of a joint headquarters with a permanent command, joint exercises, and three deployments on Kuwaiti territory: during the Iran-Iraq War; in 1994; and with the US military’s entry into Iraq in 2003. Like its predecessor, the new force is planned to be mainly a ground force, with no aerial or naval branches, and is also planned to be under Saudi command.
- b. *Command and control*: A surveillance and reconnaissance system has been set up to allow the Gulf states to jointly oversee their airspace while providing the ability to better coordinate defensive actions. The system is linked to aerial defense systems in the Gulf states to create a unified aerial picture. It works in both Arabic and English (the language used by air forces in the Gulf states), and was officially inaugurated in 2001 with an investment of more than \$160 million. However, it is not known whether the states have used it, or how.¹⁵

- c. *Defense agreement*: In December 2000, the heads of the Gulf states agreed to move toward greater security cooperation. A mutual defense pact was signed, and if ratified, it will obligate the members to consider an attack on a member state an attack on all member states. This agreement is something of a deviation from the approach of states that until now were quite cautious about closer security cooperation. Though no formal declaration has ever been made and no document on this issue published, the participants agreed on steps toward establishing a defense pact.¹⁶ The agreement, which has been described as essential for breathing new life into the informal agreements between the states, apparently does not specify conditions and circumstances in which the states will be obligated to provide mutual aid in the event of an attack on one of them. More than a decade after the signing of the original agreement and without a timetable for ratification, the Gulf Cooperation Council is still discussing possibilities for implementing the agreement.¹⁷
2. **Independent production capabilities.** Several states are seeking to establish independent production capabilities on their territory while cooperating with Western companies and tailoring the solutions to their needs. Thus while receiving advanced technologies, the Gulf states have benefited from the creation of new branches of industry and new workplaces. The United Arab Emirates, which is producing military vehicles on its territory and various advanced naval vessels (Project Baynunah), is noteworthy in this regard, as is Saudi Arabia, which is setting up on its territory a Typhoon plane production line that it bought from Britain.
3. **Diversifying sources of support.** In recent years, there has been an attempt to diversify the sources of outside security support linked with hosting of bases, weapons purchases, and participation in multinational task forces.
 - a. *Hosting of bases*: The inauguration of the “peace base” of the French fleet in Abu Dhabi in the UAE is undoubtedly an unusual event. This base is the first opened by France outside its territory in the past fifty years, and the first built in a country that was not a French colony in the past. Despite the UAE’s long history of cooperation with the United States and Great Britain, this is the

first (official) foreign base located in the UAE since independence, and according to publications it includes ground, aerial, and naval elements. The opening of the French base was intended to send a deterrent message to Iran: if it attacks the UAE, this will also be an attack on France.¹⁸

- b. *Procurement sources*: This phenomenon is largely unique to the Gulf states. Diversifying sources of weapons procurement requires duplication of training, maintenance, and inventory systems, and makes it difficult to move components and parts between different weapon systems. In addition, different manufacturers use different methods of operation and training. Nevertheless, the Gulf states are investing larger sums to equip themselves with parallel systems. Thus, for example, the UAE's air force is equipped with both American-made and French-made fighter planes, and the Saudi air force operates both American and British fighter jets. Reports on Saudi attempts "to persuade" Russia not to supply Russian-made advanced air defense weapons (S-300) to Iran by purchasing a newer generation of anti-aircraft missiles (S-400) are part of this trend.¹⁹
- c. *Multinational forces*: In recent years, several task forces and multinational forces have been established in the Gulf. By participating in security initiatives such as these, the Gulf states seek to diversify the sources of their security support. The strengthening of the partnership with NATO in the framework of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the active participation in Combined Task Force 152, the American-led multinational naval task force stationed in Bahrain, are prominent examples of this trend. As for non-Western states, despite growing interest in access to the Gulf's resources on the part of China and India, they cannot or are not interested at this point in defending shipping lanes or essential facilities in the Gulf. However, in the future in the wake of exponential growth and the need for access to energy resources to sustain it, increasing military strength, and the establishment of blue-water navy capabilities in these countries, they may expand their military presence in the Gulf.

The Gulf states fear that the planned withdrawal of American soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan will naturally reduce the American military

presence in the Gulf, which is behind their efforts to bring new actors into the arena in order to maximize security. It is possible that the goal of these steps is also to signal to the United States that the Gulf states have alternatives to the Americans. By hosting foreign bases, as with weapons procurement issues, the Gulf states decrease the fear of excessive dependence on one country, which could threaten them or put pressure on them merely by “turning off the tap.”

Limitations of the Buildup

Procurement of individual weapon systems cannot equal real military force and the ability to wage a modern war against Iran, mainly because of several factors:

- a. **Built-in weakness.** The Gulf states suffer from a lack of strategic depth and a small population, as compared with Iran’s 70 million people. Iran controls the entire eastern coast of the Gulf, and the total population of the Gulf states is about half that of Iran. This built-in weakness translates into vulnerability since the Gulf states have some 44 percent of the world’s oil reserves and 24 percent of the world’s natural gas reserves, and because they are a target for outside intervention and need outside support to protect them.
- b. **Differing conceptions of the threat:** Every state in the Gulf Cooperation Council has a different view of the threats it faces. Each state makes its own calculations, and each is bilaterally connected through different agreements with outside forces for protection. Different security agendas, suspicion and lack of trust, an Iranian attempt to drive a wedge between the states, and the fear of Saudi domination, as well as the comfort provided by the American “defense umbrella,” have contributed to their reluctance to participate in a joint defense initiative.
- c. **Internal constraints:** The percentage of those serving in the armed forces in the Gulf states is even lower than in other Arab states because none of the Gulf states, other than Kuwait, has compulsory service. The issue is sensitive, because it contradicts the “contract” between the citizens and the rulers of these countries, which grants state benefits in exchange for the non-participation of the citizens in the political process. Conscription is likely to cause tremendous pressure from the citizenry for greater participation in the political

process and thereby undermine the stability of the regimes. Thus, for example, Saudi Arabia's population is more than 25 million, but it has no more than 220,000 soldiers in all of its security forces. There is also an ethnic element: Shiites are not eager to join the security forces, and when they do, they suffer discrimination in advancing through the military ranks.

- d. **Dependence on foreigners:** Since all of the Gulf states suffer from small populations, they employ many foreign citizens in all realms of life, including defense. Weapons deals generally include maintenance contracts whose value is sometimes greater than the value of the systems themselves. Foreign workers employed by the weapons manufacturers provide training in ongoing maintenance on all levels, from spare parts to fourth-echelon repair, i.e., repairs and improvements in weapons systems. Furthermore, the Gulf states are attempting to compensate for their inability to draft the population (military service is seen as not prestigious and not well paying) by stationing foreign citizens, many of them from Asia, as a substitute for local military men. The result is that the Gulf states need to rely on mercenaries, which means that their armies are expensive in peacetime and not necessarily loyal in wartime.

Conclusion

Despite the scope and quality of the procurement, or perhaps because of it, the Gulf armed forces have remained small and limited in their ability to operate and maintain many advanced weapon systems. The result is that the Arab Gulf states lack the ability to act independently as a counterweight to Iran. It is difficult to see how accelerated purchase of advanced weapons systems would contribute to the security of these states if it has not done so in the past. Furthermore, Iran's continued buildup of unconventional weapons will require even greater projection of American strength in the Persian Gulf than what exists today. If Iran does not show willingness to change its position on its nuclear program, there will be no substitute for increasing American strength in or near the Gulf in a way that will allow the United States to respond to or initiate effective actions against Iran.

With Iran's approaching 'break out capability' the Arab Gulf states will have no choice but to increase their cooperation with the United

States, and possibly even de facto come under the American defense umbrella. If this is the case, the buildup process in the Gulf can be integrated in a policy of deterrence and containment of Iran, but will also help to confront Iran if it chooses to respond to an attack on its territory, or if it initiates an offensive move in response to the tightening of economic sanctions. In such an event, the weapon systems will serve to protect American forces and allies in the Gulf. In the view of the Gulf states, purchase of advanced American-made systems is one way to ensure the American commitment to continue maintaining a military presence in the Gulf in the future as well.

What does this mean for Israel? In Israel there is a tendency to take a grave view of the sales of advanced weaponry to Arab countries, and in fact, the possibility that these weapons will be turned against Israel one day – through the fall of a regime or their transfer to hostile states or terrorist organizations – cannot be entirely ruled out. At the same time, this sort of argument may have practical benefit when Israel requests newer technologies from the United States with the claim that the IDF's qualitative advantage is being eroded.²⁰ Yet in any event, the strengthening of the Gulf states' military capabilities serves Israel's interests, especially if they adopt a more aggressive stance toward Iran. In addition, the deployment of missile defense systems in the Gulf is liable to improve early warning capabilities for any Iranian attack against Israel.

The possibility that the weapons reaching the Gulf states would ever be turned against Israel is very small, and their advantages currently exceed the potential price. Emphasizing America's commitment to the security of its allies in the Gulf through the supply of advanced American weaponry and its integration in missile defense programs in the Gulf suits Israel's interests: it increases the pressure on Iran, strengthens the self-confidence of the rulers, and is liable to make it easier for them to take a tougher stance against Iran.

The dilemma in the Gulf is not a simple one. On the one hand, the Gulf states do not want to see a radical nuclear state beside them that will dictate the Gulf's political, economic, and military agenda. On the other hand, they fear a scenario in which, in the absence of an attractive diplomatic option, Iran's nuclear facilities will be attacked and in response Iran will choose to strike their territory. In order to prevent

a direct conflict with Iran, the Gulf states have declared on various occasions that they will not allow their territory to be used for an attack on Iran. However, it is possible that there will be no escaping this if the United States chooses to use military force against Iran. If the monarchs are convinced there are indications that Iran intends to “break out” to nuclear military capability and that a military action is the only way to prevent this – and if there is an explicit request from the United States – it is reasonable to assume that they will allow it to use their territory for this purpose. It is possible that ultimately they will prefer to absorb a limited blow from Iran, painful though it might be, and not to live for many years with the negative consequences of Iran’s possession of this type of weapon.

From the outset, the military procurement in the Gulf was not intended to balance Iran’s strength; the Gulf states understand that even if they invest tremendous resources in equipping themselves militarily, their national security will to a large extent be dependent on foreign powers. The goal of the military buildup is to demonstrate their activism domestically and abroad and be integrated in America’s operative plans in the Gulf, and it is one way to deflect the fire from their territory. But it can also strengthen their deterrent capability, and if it fails, it can delay and interfere with any Iranian attack on the Gulf states until the Western forces arrive. One of the main implications of the conventional military buildup is the limitation on Iran’s freedom of action in the Gulf, and even the (potential) establishment of a certain ability to attack its territory. The Gulf states already possess better weapon systems than those in the Iranian army’s possession, even if it is unlikely that they will exploit their potential advantage in order to confront Iran directly. Because of a long list of basic conditions, these trends in the Gulf states’ security concept, some of them new, cannot in practice be translated into military superiority in the Gulf and into the ability to serve as a counterweight to Iran’s strength. They too are likely to remain, at least in the foreseeable future, “on paper.”

Notes

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- 1 At a January 2010 conference on policy toward Iran at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in conjunction with the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), the possibility was raised that the Gulf states' advantage in advanced weapon systems would provide them with a better capability of confronting Iran. See <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubPDFs/StrategicReport03.pdf>.
- 2 Larijani: "Don't Allow Iran Attack from Gulf," *Kuwait Times*, January 28, 2010.
- 3 As a rule, historical experience shows that there is a large gap between Iran's belligerent declarations and its policy, which is more pragmatic. However, Iran has not hesitated to strike the Persian Gulf states in the past, for example, during the Iran-Iraq War, because of the assistance they provided to Iraq.
- 4 Defense Intelligence Agency, *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Military Power of Iran*, April 2010, http://media.washingtontimes.com/media/docs/2010/Apr/20/Iran_Military_Report.pdf.
- 5 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Iran's Ballistic Missile Capabilities: A Net Assessment*, May 2010.
- 6 *Haaretz*, June 11, 2007.
- 7 Iran sees itself as a regional power, and its forces act in accordance with that view. It is also striving to improve its ability to project its power beyond the Persian Gulf, and for this purpose the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) has increased its activity in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in the past two years. In February 2010, Iran inaugurated the first Iranian-made battleship, and it is also the only country in the Gulf in possession of submarines (Kilo class) and midget submarines (Yono class and Nahang class).
- 8 Because of Iraq's significant relative weakness at this time, data on its military is not included in the calculation of the current military balance.
- 9 Thus, for example, Qatar also participated in the naval maneuvers held by the Revolutionary Guards in the Gulf in April 2010. The head of Qatar's military delegation, Abd al-Rahim Ibrahim al-Janahi, who attended the maneuvers as an observer, said that Qatar would like to benefit from Iranian military expertise and to undertake joint maneuvers with Iran. MEMRI, April 26, 2010.
- 10 Congressional Research Service, *Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations*, September 2009.
- 11 "U.S. Speeding up Missile Defenses in Persian Gulf," *New York Times*, January 31, 2010. See also "U.S. Urges GCC to Buy Weapons to Face Iran," *Middle East Newsline*, September 9, 2009. In this context, there has been a series of visits by senior American officials to the Gulf states. Over the course of one

- month, from mid-February to mid-March 2010, Secretary of State Clinton, Defense Secretary Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mullen, and Commander of the US Central Command Petraeus all visited the Gulf states.
- 12 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010*. See also David Kenner, "Get Yer Anti-Ballistic Missile Here," *Foreign Policy*, March 15, 2010.
 - 13 "Gulf States Set to Spend More on Armaments," *Financial Times*, May 3, 2010.
 - 14 Michael Knights, "Changing Conventional Military Balance in the Gulf," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Policy Watch* 1577, September 14, 2009.
 - 15 *Jane's C⁴I Systems*, July 20, 2009.
 - 16 *Congressional Research Service Report to Congress*, The Library of Congress, February 2001.
 - 17 *Kuwait News Agency*, November 1, 2009.
 - 18 The International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Gulf States Step Up Defences," *Strategic Comments* 15, no. 9 (November 2009).
 - 19 *Financial Times*, September 29, 2009, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/38e8ec8e-ad21-11de-9caf-00144feabdc0.html?ncklick_check=1.
 - 20 Yiftah Shapir, "The United States and the Buildup of Military Force in the Persian Gulf," *INSS Insight* No. 161, February 14, 2010.