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## SECURITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF: NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past decade, the Gulf states have made important strides in developing some of their own defensive capabilities, strengthening their bilateral relationships with the United States and other Western militaries, and integrating their armed forces. Nevertheless, a new regional security architecture might bring important added advantages.

Any new security architecture for the Gulf region must satisfy three basic goals:

1. It should make the Gulf states safer than they already are;
2. It should simplify, rather than complicate, the security dynamics of the region; and
3. It should be flexible and robust enough to withstand both internal and external changes.

Second, a new security architecture for the Gulf should be designed to deal with the two principal, external threats to the security of the Gulf states:

1. A potentially aggressive, nuclear-armed Iran that seeks hegemony in the region; and
2. An Iraq whose future is uncertain, and that could potentially destabilize the region either by sliding back into civil war or emerging as a new

dictatorship—one that might be aggressive or closely aligned with an aggressive Iran.

### Working within the GCC Structure

Since 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has proven to be an effective and enduring security structure for the states of the Persian Gulf littoral.

- ❖ The key question then is whether it is possible to imagine changes to the GCC structure that would strengthen it beyond what it has already achieved.

In terms of improving the effectiveness or impact of the GCC, perhaps the most far-reaching change would be to turn what is now a *de facto* military alliance into an official one through the signing of a mutual defense pact.

- ❖ A mutual defense pact would have little impact on the capabilities of the GCC, but could be a useful symbolic gesture of defiance and solidarity, especially if taken after Iran crosses the nuclear threshold.

The notion of expanding the GCC to include other states has some appeal, but most obvious candidates would likely bring as many liabilities as assets with them in the eyes of the existing members of the GCC. Jordan, Turkey, and (eventually) Iraq would make the best new participants, but all carry important baggage that might not be acceptable to the existing GCC states:

Jordan is not a Gulf state, Iraq is not a Sunni state, and Turkey is not an Arab state. From a security perspective, Jordan is the worst candidate of the three, but security considerations may not be the primary rationale of the GCC leadership.

### Moving beyond the GCC

Given the successes enjoyed by other regions employing cooperative security arrangements, it is worth asking if any of those arrangements could furnish useful models for the Gulf.

- ***The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*** has little to offer the Gulf because it is largely a loose, informal confederation similar to the GCC, but one which has not made the same kind of progress on security cooperation that the GCC states have (although ASEAN has made far greater progress in economic integration).
- ***The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*** does not provide a useful model since its primary focus has not been on external security, but internal political transformation (something the Gulf states do need to address, with added urgency since the start of the “Arab Spring,” but which is only indirectly related to the question of how to increase their security from external threats).
- ***The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)***, the predecessor to the OSCE, on the other hand, provides for a potentially very useful model of what the Gulf states might adopt to create a more peaceful, stable Persian Gulf.

### A CSCE Model for the Gulf

A CSCE-type approach would need to begin as a series of regular meetings at which the members could discuss various security issues. All sides would be allowed to lay out their fears, the threats they see, and how they would like to see those threats reduced. For particularly complex issues, subcommittees would try to negotiate solutions whenever possible. Eventually, the process would move on to devise confidence-building measures that could be taken by one or all sides, symmetrically or asymmetrically. Over time, states could use the meetings/organization to resolve disputes, allay fears and manage conflicts and crises. Ultimately, once sufficient

trust has been established among the members, the mechanism could be used to devise arms control agreements that would substantively contribute to the security and stability of the region.

- An approach modeled after the CSCE could entail creating a standing organization, or just a process, with set meetings and the ability to schedule additional sessions or hive-off subcommittees to address specific disagreements or proposals in greater depth.
- The basic principles of a CSCE-type security “condominium” for the Gulf would have to include a pledge by all member states not to interfere in the internal politics of other members, and a commitment to decision-making by consensus so that every member state would be able to veto any action by the collective.

A CSCE-type security framework would ideally consist of all of the states of the Gulf littoral and a select number of others for whom the security of the Gulf is a primary concern—and who would not try to hijack the forum to deal with other security matters unrelated to the Gulf.

- Beyond the GCC core, Iran and Iraq would have to be invited to participate. Only with their participation would it be possible to address the Gulf’s main security problems through cooperative threat reduction and conflict resolution measures.
- Although Israel, Pakistan, Egypt, and Morocco have all been mentioned as possible additions to such an arrangement, they should all be excluded because the security of the Gulf is not their primary concern and they might try to hijack the framework to address their own security problems which are largely irrelevant to the Gulf.
- The United States should be a member, just as it has been a member of the CSCE/OSCE, because it is the principal military ally of the GCC states (and Iraq, hopefully) and the principal threat to Iran. Without the United States, conversations among the members would be artificial and divorced from reality. Moreover, American participation in a Gulf security pro-

cess might help legitimize the critical American military role in the region.

- Because China and India both have great and growing interests in the Gulf, as well as the potential to play roles similar to that of the United States, they too would be good candidates for inclusion. Indeed, attempting to exclude China or India could compromise such an organization because both have the economic and political clout (and will eventually have the military strength) to create real problems if their views are not taken into account.
- To make American and Chinese participation more palatable, it might be preferable to invite all five of the permanent members of the UNSC to participate. Although Russia has the potential to play an unhelpful role, it would probably be better to have it inside the organization where it could be placated, rather than kept out—which might stoke its desire to create problems.

It will be critical to keep in mind that even a new, CSCE-like framework for the Gulf would not solve all of the region's problems by itself. Such a new architecture would merely be a mechanism to facilitate actions that would be harder to take without it. Ultimately, however, it would still require all of the member states to be willing to accept compromises on their own security actions in return for their adversaries doing the same. A CSCE-like security system for the Gulf will not be a panacea, but if there is a willingness on all sides to try, it could furnish an excellent path to a more peaceful and secure Gulf region for all.

## INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and under the specter of Iran's possible development of a nuclear weapon, there is a strong rationale for the states of the Persian Gulf region to consider how best they can bolster their own security. Over the past decade, the Gulf states have made important strides in developing some of their own capabilities, strengthening their bilateral relationships with the United States and other Western militaries, and integrating their armed forces. One additional area that warrants examination is the possibility of devising new diplomatic-military arrangements—a new security “architecture” for the Gulf region—that could complement the military-technical improvements that the Gulf states have already made.

Any new security architecture for the Gulf region must satisfy three principal goals:

1. The new architecture should make the Gulf states safer than they already are;<sup>1</sup>
2. It should simplify, rather than complicate, the security dynamics of the region because complexity is typically both harder to sustain and easier for malevolent powers to undermine; and
3. It should be flexible and robust enough to withstand both internal and external changes.

Second, and derived from this set of goals, any new security architecture for the Gulf should be designed to deal with the two principal, external threats to the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states:

1. A potentially aggressive, potentially nuclear-armed Iran that sees itself as the “natural” hegemon of the region and has sought to harm or overturn regional governments that resisted its dominance; and
2. An Iraq whose future is uncertain, and that could potentially threaten to destabilize the region either by sliding back into civil war or emerging as a new dictatorship—one that might be aggressive like previous Iraqi dictatorships, or might be closely aligned with an aggressive Iran.

In addition to addressing these two obvious threats, a new security architecture for the region must also be able to cope with the changing balances of power in the region, as well as in the wider world. Indeed, ideally, such a new framework would help the states of the region navigate those shifts. In fact, all of these threats argue for greater cooperation on security matters within the Gulf.

## WORKING WITHIN THE GCC STRUCTURE

Since 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council has proven to be an effective and enduring security structure for the states of the Persian Gulf littoral. Moreover, the GCC is already a de facto security alliance, placing it well beyond the kind of alternative security architectures that Southeast Asia (ASEAN) and Europe (CSCE/OSCE) have been able to develop. Indeed, alt-

though less powerful, the GCC has functioned as a Gulf version of NATO, with far greater and more effective cooperation than what is present in ASEAN or the CSCE/OSCE. For that reason, when considering the reconceptualization of security for the Gulf states, it is worth first asking whether and how the existing GCC framework might be employed as a foundation.

### Deepening the Gulf Cooperation Council

Although the GCC Charter makes no mention of security considerations, the council already functions as a de facto security alliance. Indeed, the six nations have made far greater progress in coordinating their security activities than they have in the wide range of non-military areas specifically stated in the charter. The GCC has a functional Defense Planning Council and its armed forces have extensive liaison relations and (under U.S. auspices) have made tremendous progress in integrating their doctrine, communications, intelligence, and even equipment. The Peninsula Shield Force has historically underperformed, but it is a real, integrated military force that has shown a capacity to act and act collectively. Moreover, on more than one occasion, the members of the GCC have demonstrated their commitment to one another's security, and their willingness to act on that commitment.

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There is always more that can be done to further integrate the armed forces of six sovereign nations, but the truth is that at this point, the GCC is quite well integrated and functional as a military alliance. From the perspective of strengthening the GCC as a security entity, the area of greatest need lies in improving the military effectiveness of its member nations, not in developing more unity among them. Consequently, in practical terms, although there are still a number of small steps that could be taken to improve the security of the Gulf states by improving the functioning of the GCC as a security alliance, there are few, if any, big steps to be taken in this area.

Instead, the GCC states might look to have a greater impact on their own external security by opting to transform the organization into a formal alliance, now or at some point in the near future. While this might do little to further improve the already quite good functioning of the alliance, it could have a very important diplomatic impact. A formal alliance in which all of the states of the GCC openly pledge to defend one another could send a

powerful signal to Iran or other predatory neighboring states, potentially including a backsliding Iraq. It would be a statement that they will not be able to divide and conquer the GCC states. Especially in the face of the possibility of Iran suddenly crossing the nuclear threshold, an alliance would likely reassure the people of the smaller Gulf states that they would not be abandoned by Saudi Arabia and the other, larger Gulf states. Moreover, because of the collective importance of the Gulf states to the international economy, formally knitting the six states together will force would-be aggressors to consider that the United States, China, Europe, and other external great powers may be more likely to come to the defense of all of the GCC states, not just the major oil producers—or just Saudi Arabia—if any of them were attacked. It may also be easier for outside powers to interact with a unified formal alliance than with six individual member states linked only by the more minimal GCC organizational structure.

Especially in the context of some important new escalation in the threat to the Gulf States, like Iran's crossing of the nuclear threshold or the reemergence of an aggressive Iraq, the people of the region and likely their governments as well, may be looking for some commensurate act (even if it is only symbolic) as a way of demonstrating that there are things that the GCC can do to in-

crease its own security in the face of an expanded threat. Transforming the GCC from a very functional informal alliance into a formal alliance could be a highly effective way to do so with little downside because the six nations already have such close security cooperation.

### Expanding the Gulf Cooperation Council

Staying within the framework of the existing Gulf strategic architecture, the GCC, the obvious alternative to deepening the alliance is to expand it. Since there is little more that the GCC can do to deepen the ties of an already close and functional de facto military alliance beyond making it de jure, broadening the alliance by bringing in other members has some appeal. In theory, adding states, including powerful ones, could help strengthen the GCC and bolster the security of its members by augmenting its military strength and increasing its diplomatic weight. Throughout history, alliances have sought to maximize their size—especially in time of crisis or conflict—to maximize the size of the armies on their side. However, the downside to this



strategy is that additional allies often bring additional complications. Especially if there is no imminent threat, those complications can pull states into crises and conflicts they never sought, and from which they were previously immune. So, in considering whether to bring in new members, the GCC will want to deem whether a new member will be a net producer or net consumer of security.

This is a particularly important caution when considering the expansion of the GCC. Most of the potential states that might be brought into a widened alliance with the GCC could pull the GCC into strategic problems elsewhere, beyond the Gulf, that could easily prove to be much greater liabilities than any benefit the inclusion of those states would bring. Moreover, some potential additions to the GCC could dramatically change perceptions of the purpose of the GCC in ways that could be harmful to it and its member states.

Indeed, the Gulf region forms what academics refer to as a “security system,” meaning that all of the members of that grouping see each other as their principal allies and threats, much more so than other nearby states, even ones that may border some of the members of that security system. Thus, one consideration in any new security architecture for the Gulf is that going beyond the Gulf security system could create far more problems than it solves by introducing other concerns—and potentially the dynamics of entirely different security systems (like that of the Levant, South Asia, or Central Asia) into those of the Gulf.

As an additional point, cooperative military alliances (formal and informal) tend to work best when they operate on a consensus basis. This has been particularly true for the GCC, which also has Arab cultural traditions of consensus building to navigate. Thus, bringing in any additional state will inevitably make consensus building harder, and this is particularly true when some of the potential states have important differences with the existing members. Many of the potential candidates examined below could greatly complicate GCC decision making both because their interests are so different, and because their perspectives will be quite different, making consensus building far more problematic than the mere addition of another state would suggest.

**Jordan.** In many ways, Jordan is the most obvious candidate for inclusion in an expanded GCC—and the idea

was formally broached in 2011. Jordan is the state that looks most like the other members of the GCC. It is a conservative Arab monarchy with strong ties to the West, it borders Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and it has an overwhelmingly Sunni Arab population. Moreover, the Jordanian Armed Forces are somewhat more capable than those of many of the other Arab states. In particular, the small Royal Jordanian Air Force and the country’s special forces are quite able by regional standards. From Jordan’s perspective, it could certainly use closer ties to the Gulf, especially if that comes with greater financial assistance, which it desperately needs.

For these reasons, Jordan is one of the best candidates for inclusion in an expanded GCC. But there are still very significant downsides for the Gulf states were Jordan to join. Of greatest importance, Jordan is largely uninterested in security developments in the Gulf, which is physically distant and psychologically remote. Jordan certainly does not like the idea of a more powerful Iran, but it does not fear direct Iranian intervention the way that the Gulf states do. Rather, it mostly fears Iranian support to Syria and Hizballah. Even Iraq has only ever been seen as a rather minor threat that was easily placated. Instead, Jordan looks westward and northward, toward Israel and Syria.

These are Jordan’s principal security problems, vastly compounded by the fact that the cleavage in the Hashemite Kingdom is not the Sunni-Shi’i divide, but the split between a majority Palestinian population and a ruling, minority “East Banker” community. Thus, bringing Jordan into the GCC would probably be far more beneficial to Jordan than to the Gulf states: Jordan’s limited military capabilities would not add much to the GCC order of battle (especially when the American military presence and U.S. commitment to the Gulf states is taken into account), but Jordan could drag the GCC into Israeli-Palestinian problems and the ongoing Syrian civil war in a far more tangible way. It would require the GCC to become much more actively involved in both of those intractable problems than it has been in the past, likely to the political, diplomatic, psychological, and strategic detriment of the GCC.

**Morocco.** The other country that has been formally suggested for inclusion in the GCC is Morocco. Like Jordan, it is an overwhelmingly Sunni Arab monarchy aligned with the West. Although the king of Morocco appears more willing to embrace domestic reforms than

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many other Middle Eastern monarchies, his goal remains a controlled transformation and the retention of considerable power for the monarch. Beyond this, Morocco has effectively nothing to recommend it for inclusion in the GCC. Morocco's military is less capable than Jordan's, and the country has no hope of projecting power into the Persian Gulf to assist the Gulf states in an hour of need. Consequently, any expansion of the GCC to Morocco would have little effect on security cooperation in the Gulf—although Morocco might be a good candidate for economic integration, if the GCC ever makes real progress on this ostensible goal.

It is worth considering that expanding the GCC to include Jordan and Morocco could have a very important downside in the realm of public opinion and public diplomacy. Because neither Jordan nor Morocco is threatened by developments in the Gulf, nor are they able to project significant power into the Gulf, bringing them into the GCC would make the organization appear to be less intended to bolster the Gulf states' security against external threats, and more an organization intended only to preserve each country's internal status quo. Again, the only thing that Jordan and Morocco have in common with the Gulf states is that they are all Sunni-dominated monarchies; they do not have common external security threats, only common internal security concerns—and those are largely the product of domestic unrest against political, economic, and social inequality. Consequently, adding Jordan and Morocco would change the widespread impression of the GCC as an alliance of six Gulf states attempting to secure themselves against threats from Iraq and Iran, into a perception that the GCC is nothing more than a coordinating body for the old, autocratic monarchies of the Middle East to coordinate their efforts to repress their unhappy populations. The GCC could become a twenty-first century version of the nineteenth century's "Holy Alliance," by which Russia's tsar and the faltering monarchs of Europe attempted to prevent revolutionary social, economic, and political progress. This could be a very unfortunate shift for the GCC.

**Turkey.** From a pure security perspective, Turkey might be a good candidate for inclusion in an expanded GCC. First, Turkey does face threats from an aggressive Iran and a potentially unstable (or aggressive) Iraq. Second, Turkey actually has considerable military power that it can apply directly against both of those states (although

its ability to project power into the Gulf itself is quite limited.) Moreover, Turkey's relationship with the United States and Europe through NATO would help reinforce the Western security commitment to the Gulf.

Nevertheless, Turkey does have some liabilities as well. Most obviously, Turkey is not a Gulf country, it is not an Arab state, and it is not a monarchy. While its population is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, it has a state ideology of secularism and important elements of the Turkish elite adhere to that notion. None of these points are technically relevant to the GCC Charter, and none are relevant in any way to potential security cooperation between Turkey and the Gulf states, but it would mean violating a very important unwritten rule about the nature of the GCC. In addition, bringing Turkey into the GCC would explicitly target Iraq and Iran in a way that the organization has traditionally tried to avoid—and in a way that Ankara has too. There would be no way to claim that the GCC was simply about mutual defense among the Gulf states against all theoretical adversaries. Turkey's inclusion could only be seen as a naked threat to Iran and Iraq (if Iraq were not itself brought in as a member, see below)—a potentially very helpful threat from the GCC's perspective since both Baghdad and Tehran

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have great respect for Ankara, but an unmistakable threat nonetheless. Turkey's inclusion in the GCC would therefore be simultaneously both a caution and a provocation to Iran and Iraq, again assuming Iraq is not brought in itself. Ultimately, if the GCC were willing to shed its Arab complexion and were determined to more openly confront Iran and/or Iraq, Turkey might be the best candidate for inclusion.

**Iraq.** Iraq's inclusion in an expanded GCC should properly be seen as a medium- to longer-term proposition. At present, Iraq remains too unstable, too violent, and too volatile. The risks of a recurrence of civil war in Iraq are high and will remain so for at least several years to come. Even if Iraq avoids civil war, it could slip into a sectarian dictatorship or a kind of failed state—none of which would make it a desirable candidate for the GCC. Moreover, although Iraq's government is overwhelmingly dominated by nationalists with little love for Iran, Tehran nonetheless has acquired considerable influence in Baghdad. It remains to be seen whether, even against their will, Iraq's leadership will become dominated or "Finlandized" by Iran. Until this situation

has clarified, it would be imprudent to extent Iraq an offer of membership in the GCC.

On the other hand, if in several years Iraq has avoided these pitfalls and has emerged as a stable, pluralistic, and independent nation, then it could be an excellent candidate for admission to the GCC. Like the Gulf states, Iraq's primary security focus is on the Gulf and Iran. While it has some concerns related to Turkey and Syria, it is mainly oriented south and eastward, making it a natural member of the Gulf security system. Iraq has the potential strength to balance Iran and a stable, independent Iraq will likely have good relations with the United States and Europe—and its military doctrine and equipment will likely be quite compatible with that of the GCC militaries. Likewise, Iraq's own oil wealth will give it a number of other similar interests and abilities to those of the Gulf states. The one “discrepancy” will be Iraq's majority Shi'i population (and its Kurdish minority). Again, there is no security rationale for excluding Iraq based on this reality, but as a practical matter, the GCC states have traditionally seen their association as being one of Sunni Arab states.

As with Turkey, if the GCC states can look past this traditional preference, Iraq's inclusion in the GCC could be a significant plus for the organization. Indeed, the GCC might hold out potential membership as an incentive for Iraq's fractious leadership to make the necessary compromises to stabilize their country, distance themselves from Iran, and heal the country's paralyzing rifts.

**Yemen.** If Iraq's eventual inclusion in the GCC would bring roughly equivalent benefits to both Iraq and the Gulf States, in the case of Yemen, the advantages would lie primarily (although not entirely) with the Yemenis. A democratizing Yemen desperately needs massive amounts of foreign assistance quickly to deal with the economic stagnation, corruption, and political dysfunction that brought down the Saleh government and could easily destabilize its successors. Inclusion in the GCC would seem to be an excellent way for Sanaa to secure such assistance from its wealthy cousins to the north. Likewise, admission to the GCC would likely grease the skids for Yemen to develop military ties to the United States—who would probably want to see the newest GCC member fully interoperable with the rest of the alliance and with its own forces in the event that the entire GCC were ever mobilized for war. Indeed, the Unit-

ed States has its own interests for wanting to deepen its military to Yemen, starting with a desire to snuff out the dangerous al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula.

But Yemen's inclusion may not be so attractive for the GCC states. Yemen would bring a large, poor, under-educated population without oil wealth into the GCC. It is riven with internal conflicts—geographic, sectarian, tribal, and political—at least as complex and historically violent as Iraq's. It has virtually no military power, and absolutely no capacity to project power beyond its borders. In addition, like Jordan and Morocco, its security problems are not the security problems of the Gulf; after its internal security issues, it is primarily focused on threats from the Horn of Africa and secondarily on the threat from Saudi Arabia itself. Consequently, including Yemen in the GCC could pull the Gulf states into the problems of the Horn and Red Sea without significantly bolstering their ability to defend themselves and wield influence within the Gulf itself, the *raison d'être* of the GCC alliance.

Nevertheless, the rationale for Yemen's exclusion could be turned around and seen as a motive for its inclusion. The Saudis have long worried that Yemen's large, poor, and fractious population is a threat to the Kingdom. Bringing the new Yemen into the GCC, providing it with

large-scale economic assistance, and anchoring its security within the GCC context could prove to be the best way to obviate any threat to the Gulf states from Yemen. The more that Yemen feels safe and its population see their economic circumstances improving, the less potential for Yemen to cause problems for the Saudis and other Gulf states.

**Pakistan.** The last country worth considering for inclusion in an expanded GCC (or, more properly in this case, an expanded Gulf security architecture that would include the GCC) is Pakistan. In the 1980s, the Pakistanis deployed roughly 20,000 troops in Saudi Arabia, Pakistani officers remain mainstays of many GCC navies and air forces, and Islamabad has indicated its willingness to provide troops again in future. Moreover, Pakistan has a considerable interest in Gulf affairs, derived from the aid it receives from various GCC states, and its large expatriate community in the Gulf. In addition, Pakistan has one other, very important asset to offer the GCC: nuclear weapons. If Iran were to cross the nuclear threshold, Pakistan is the only other nucle-

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ar-armed Muslim state to which the Gulf states might look to balance Iran within the Islamic *Umma*. To the extent that the Gulf states see a closer association with the United States as unpalatable, partnering with Pakistan might be a more agreeable alternative in building deterrence.

However, overall, it seems more likely that Pakistan would prove to be a complication, not an augmentation, to any expansion of the GCC. Pakistan's vital interests do not lie in the Gulf, they lie entirely in South Asia. Its interests in the Gulf are primarily driven by money—money for conventional deployments, money from their expatriates, and money from aid. Thus, it probably could be persuaded to join the GCC, if the price were high enough, but even then it seems unlikely that Pakistan could be counted on when it was needed most. Islamabad shares a long border with Iran and is uninterested in going to war, or even getting into a crisis, with Tehran. For that reason, Pakistan is extremely unlikely to want to brandish its own nuclear capability on behalf of the Gulf states in the event of a confrontation with Iran—both because Pakistan has few vital interests in the Gulf and is not looking to get into nuclear crises with Iran—with which it otherwise has generally amicable relations.

A reasonable counterargument to this would be that so much of the problem of dealing with a nuclear Iran would come down to perceptions, uncertainties, and symbolism. In this regard, Pakistan's mere inclusion in a new Gulf security architecture might be adequate to reassure the Gulf populations that Iran will not be able to use its nuclear muscle to bend them to Tehran's will. In addition, it may inject just enough uncertainty in the minds of Iranian leaders regarding how Pakistan would behave that it might convince them to show more restraint than they otherwise might. While this is a true statement and a reasonable enough position, it will be extremely difficult to calculate the possible deterrent benefit from Pakistan's inclusion. Moreover, it would come with some clear downsides. Pakistan isn't interested in Gulf security. It is focused on its own unstable security system in South Asia and obsessed with the (mostly mythical) threat posed by India, both directly and indirectly through Afghanistan. Pakistan is largely Sunni, but it is not Arab, and it is desperately poor. Consequently, convincing Pakistan to make a meaningful commitment to Gulf security would undoubtedly require truly massive, constant payoffs to Islamabad to help deal with its economic and social chaos. It might also entangle the Gulf states in the exasperating security problems of South Asia, potentially diminishing their overall security rather than bolstering it.

## MOVING BEYOND THE GCC MODEL

The arguments for and against expanding the GCC (let alone deepening it by converting it to a formal mutual security pact) beg the question of whether Gulf security could be enhanced by something more than a revised, but fairly traditional, military alliance.<sup>2</sup> In particular, given the successes enjoyed by other regions employing more modern cooperative security arrangements—including those that have involved potential adversaries—it is worth asking if any of those could furnish useful models for a similar framework for the Gulf.

### Alternative Models for a New Security Architecture in the Gulf

At least since the time of the ancient Greeks, there have been any number of efforts on the part of different states to devise cooperative security frameworks to better defend themselves. Since the Second World War and the fall of communism, several have emerged as having been particularly successful in contributing to security in their regions of the world and these are worth examining as the basis for a possible new security cooperative for the Gulf.

*The CSCE.* In some ways, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe epitomizes what a cooperative framework can do to enhance the security of its members. Born from the 1975 Helsinki Accords, the CSCE was a process by which all of the states of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, as well as virtually all of the neutral states of Europe, were able to discuss their security concerns; security constituted one “basket” of issues, the other two “baskets” being economics and human rights (the Soviets wanted the CSCE process to focus on security issues and legitimizing the post-World War II order in Europe, whereas the West wanted to raise human rights concerns). After Helsinki, the CSCE had three “follow-up” meetings in Belgrade, Madrid, and Vienna. Far from one-time events, these conferences lasted for six months, three years, and three years respectively. In addition, the follow-up conferences spun off a number of other conferences dedicated to addressing very specific problems identified in the general sessions. Consequently, although the CSCE was not a standing forum, the conference and its sub-conferences were in session for much of the period between 1975 and 1994, when the CSCE became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), acquiring a more permanent character with a standing forum for discussions in Vienna.



Perhaps the principal security achievement of the CSCE was the establishment of a venue in which the countries of the West, the East, and the neutrals of Europe could all discuss their security problems and discuss nonviolent means of resolving them. This, in and of itself, was very helpful over the long term in reassuring both sides that the other was not aggressive and looking for an excuse to attack. From that eventual understanding, a series of more concrete achievements became possible. In particular, the CSCE process produced:

- The 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which included certain confidence-building measures, including a requirement that all major military maneuvers in Europe involving more than 25,000 troops be notified twenty-one days in advance and that countries exchange annual plans of major military activities. In parallel with the CSCE process, NATO and Warsaw Pact countries began the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks, aimed at limiting conventional forces in Europe, although those negotiations made little progress.
- The 1986 Stockholm conference agreement on confidence-building measures (formally known as “Confidence- and Security-Building Measures,” or CSBM), which went beyond the measures in the Helsinki Final Act. Here, both sides agreed to:
  - Refrain from the threat or use of force;
  - Issue prior notification of certain military activities (including those involving more than 13,000 troops or 300 tanks);
  - Invite observers to certain military activities (including those involving more than 17,000 troops);
  - Exchange annual calendars of planned military activities; and
  - Accept compulsory inspections as a means of verification—the first time ever in the history of arms control that this had been done.
- The 1990 Vienna Document (a follow-on to the Stockholm CSBM Document), which provided for countries to exchange information on existing military forces, planned deployments of major weapons systems, and military budgets. It also widened the scope of verification measures, and introduced an Annual Implementation As-

essment Meeting, which would address the implementation of the various confidence-building measures.

- The 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, signed at the CSCE summit in Paris. This was one of the most important arms control documents ever signed in that it provided a comprehensive set of guidelines that both alliances agreed to follow in limiting the quantity of main battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, artillery pieces, attack helicopters, and combat aircraft throughout Europe (from the Atlantic to the Urals). For example, NATO and the Warsaw Pact were each constrained to no more than 20,000 main battle tanks in Europe, with subzones with tighter limits that centered on the inner-German border.
- In addition, the CSCE and later the OSCE played key roles preventing conflict in the states of the former Soviet Union after the collapse of the communist system. Although it was less successful in Yugoslavia and the Caucasus, the CSCE/OSCE was widely credited as having played a critical role in the Baltic states, parts of Central Asia and the Transdnister region.

*The OSCE.* At the 1994 CSCE summit in Budapest, leaders agreed to convert the CSCE into the OSCE, with a continuous ongoing venue in Vienna. The CFE Treaty—which had been negotiated on a bloc-to-bloc basis—required updating after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact (most Warsaw Pact states subsequently joined NATO). The 1999 OSCE summit in Istanbul was the venue for signing the Adapted CFE Treaty, which applied limits on a national basis (the treaty, however, has not yet entered into force due to a dispute over Russia’s failure to implement certain measures it said it would take, and Moscow “suspended” its observance of the original CFE Treaty in 2008).

As the OSCE did not face security issues on the same level as the CSCE had during the Cold War, the OSCE in the late 1990s and early 2000s tended to place greater relative attention on human rights and democracy issues, which provoked difficulties with Russia. The Russians were not happy that so much attention was focused on the human rights “basket.” Some Russian officials argued that this was inconsistent with the Helsinki Final Act pledge of non-interference in one another’s

internal affairs, though most Western states reject that, noting that they have a right to raise other states' compliance with their commitments under the Final Act.

The OSCE remains a venue for some security discussions, including implementation of the Vienna Document on CSBMs. However, because it has focused so heavily on matters of internal political transformation, it is not a particularly appropriate model for increasing the external security of the states of the Persian Gulf region, and certainly of less relevance than its predecessor, the CSCE.

**ASEAN.** The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has a different character and culture than the CSCE/OSCE, but in terms of its purpose and methods, it has grown closer to the CSCE/OSCE model over time. Unlike the CSCE, ASEAN was founded as a formal organization with a series of set meetings each year and a number of formal subcommittees charged with devising cooperative approaches to various regional problems. In addition, ASEAN has always seen its role as promoting economic and social progress and integration, whereas for the CSCE, those ideas (although present in the Helsinki Accord and constantly invoked by Western European states) did not become the primary focus of the organization until the CSCE morphed into the OSCE. Indeed, although ASEAN was founded in 1967 largely as a bulwark against communism in Southeast Asia, it quickly shifted its emphasis to economic integration and increasing mutual prosperity, which arguably remains its primary concern today. Over the decades, as regional prosperity increased, the member states became smitten with what they termed the “ASEAN way,” stressing economic growth and cooperation over security. ASEAN has fulfilled some security-related needs, but not as a collective whole. Rather it has done so in smaller groupings configured to issues where there is essentially common cause, such as maritime cooperation.

An additional critical distinction between ASEAN and the CSCE/OSCE, is that ASEAN has excluded its primary security threats—China, and initially Vietnam as well. Many of the member states at first also feared Indonesia, which saw itself as an obvious regional hegemon. However, Indonesia was specifically included in ASEAN from the outset because Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand (the other four founding states) felt that Jakarta could best be controlled and channeled as part of the organization rather than as an outsider that would see the organization as a threat aimed against it. In 1995, Vietnam was allowed to join

both because the states of the region saw the growth of Chinese power as ever more threatening and because Vietnam had by then proven its anti-Chinese chops. Because China has been excluded, ASEAN has functioned more as a de facto alliance (like the GCC) than a cooperative security forum like the CSCE/OSCE.

In recent years, ASEAN's member states have shown greater wariness of China because of its economic growth and military muscle-flexing. This has made some ASEAN members more receptive than they were in the past to a U.S. military presence to balance and deter China. However, ASEAN has also taken important steps to appease China because none of its members (except possibly the Philippines and Vietnam, at least some of the time) wants to offend or exclude China both for fear of Chinese military power and the loss of Chinese market opportunities. Ultimately, ASEAN never has been willing to “stand up” to China in practice, another important difference with the Gulf states and their approach to would-be hegemon.

Nevertheless, over the years, ASEAN has found that engaging not only China, but other regional states as well, is important to fulfilling its mission. Thus, in 1997, ASEAN created the “ASEAN+3” grouping that added China, Japan, and South Korea. (ASEAN+3 has been important in defusing conflicts with China over the South China Sea and in hammering out the Chang Mai Initiative—which is widely credited with bringing financial stability to East Asia.) On its own, ASEAN has had a more uneven record when it comes to security matters. On the positive side of the ledger, ASEAN played a key role in mediating the Cambodian Civil War in the 1990s. On the negative side of the ledger, it has not been able to resolve border disputes between Burma and Thailand, and Indonesia and Malaysia. Moreover, while the ASEAN states did sign the 1995 Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapons Free Zone Treaty, ASEAN has not had any significant success striking arms control or even confidence-building measure agreements with China.

### **Lessons for the GCC**

Although the ASEAN model has much to recommend itself in terms of economic, political, and social integration for the Gulf, it appears to have little to offer in terms of security issues. It is difficult to make the case that ASEAN has been more successful than the GCC in the security sphere. It has allowed member states to increase defense cooperation, joint training, and some equipment interoperability. It has also allowed its

members to carry somewhat more weight when they bargain as a collective with China and other potentially threatening great powers. But on balance, the GCC has been more successful in every one of these categories. Overall, ASEAN is probably the more powerful military confederation, but this is primarily a function of the somewhat greater effectiveness of their national armed forces; ASEAN cannot approach the levels of cooperation that the Gulf states currently enjoy.

Meanwhile, because ASEAN has never included its adversaries (or external great power allies like the United States and Japan) it has not done much better than the GCC in handling confidence-building measures, crisis management, conflict prevention, or arms control agreements. Again, it is not that ASEAN's collective weight is not greater than the sum of its parts—it is. And it is not that ASEAN is not better able to negotiate with China and other major powers more effectively than the individual member countries could on their own—it is. It is just that the advantages it has accrued from its cooperative approach to security have not been more significant than those the GCC already enjoys from the same features, and that its successes (and those of the GCC) have not approached the level of the achievements of the CSCE/OSCE in those areas.

Ultimately ASEAN is too similar to the GCC to provide many useful lessons to the Gulf states for how to enhance their security in the face of Iraqi instability and/or Iranian. In the security arena, ASEAN has done no better than the GCC and arguably quite a bit worse, especially in forging disparate national militaries into a more unified coalition. Where ASEAN has been far more successful is in a range of non-security fields (especially economics) which is a separate consideration for the Gulf states, and where the Southeast Asian states may simply be too different from the Gulf states for those lessons to apply either.

By contrast, the CSCE's approach to security was quite different from the GCC's and therefore would represent a very different model for the Gulf from that which the Gulf states have pursued in the past. It was a security "condominium" that allowed two originally hostile blocs to work out arrangements to promote a more stable military balance in Europe and reduce the risk of surprise attack, rather than a traditional, even if undeclared, military alliance. Moreover, the success of the CSCE holds out the prospect that the Gulf might also be able to improve its security and stability by adopting some or all of the features that made the CSCE so successful. Obviously, because the contemporary Gulf states and

their situations are very different from those of Europe during the Cold War, the CSCE can only furnish broad patterns of activity, which would have to be adapted to the specifics circumstances of the Gulf. The CSCE/OSCE was and is quite different from the GCC.

## APPLYING THE CSCE MODEL TO THE GULF SECURITY SYSTEM

The CSCE model provides an interesting framework for enhancing the security of the Gulf states beyond the GCC model. Perhaps of greatest importance, it does not have to be seen as an alternative to the GCC and instead should be seen as an addition to it. Just as the NATO and Warsaw Pact states became participants in the CSCE process individually without shedding their membership or adherence to their alliances, so too could the Gulf states participate in a similar type of system in the Gulf. Thus, a CSCE-type security condominium should include the GCC, rather than supplanting it.

### A CSCE for the Gulf

A CSCE-type security framework would ideally consist of all of the states of the Gulf littoral and a select number of others for whom the security of the Gulf was a primary concern—and who would not try to hijack the forum to deal with other security matters unrelated to the Gulf. (A fuller treatment of membership is provided below). It could be a standing organization, or just a process, with set annual meetings and the ability to schedule additional sessions or hive-off sub-committees to address in much greater depth specific disagreements or proposals.

At the outset, all of the countries would have to agree to a series of basic ground rules for the organization/process. The entity would have to approve a set of principles to be applied to all of its activities that would include at least two critical lessons derived from both the CSCE and ASEAN: a pledge by all states not to interfere in the internal politics of other members, and a commitment to decision-making by consensus so that every member state would be able to veto any action by the collective. It is hard to imagine any of the states of the Gulf region (but particularly Iran, which will fear that this is a GCC, American, or Western trap) agreeing to participate in such a security forum except under these conditions. Thus, it is not only important, but necessary to set these conditions at the outset. Doing so, however, would mean that the framework would not deal with internal political development (unlike the OSCE) and would not be able to impose constructs on

any member state. (Ultimately, it also means that if Iran is caught interfering in the internal affairs of another country, it can be “named and shamed” and possibly punished by the Gulf security organization/process.)

The progression of the CSCE itself provides an excellent model for how a Gulf cooperative security process could and should progress. It should begin as a series of regular meetings at which the members could simply discuss their various security concerns and their perceptions of threats. All sides would be allowed to lay out their fears and the threats they see, and discuss how they would like to see those threats reduced. For particularly complex issues, subcommittees would try to negotiate solutions. Eventually, the process would (hopefully) move on to devise confidence-building measures that could be taken by one or all sides, symmetrically or asymmetrically. Over time, states could use the meetings/organization to resolve disputes, allay fears, and manage conflicts and crises. Ultimately, the aspiration would be to use the mechanism to devise arms control agreements that would substantively contribute to the security and stability of the region.

The history of the CSCE (and to a lesser extent, ASEAN) suggests several key features for a similar security architecture for the Gulf.

### **The Adversaries Cannot Be Excluded**

The key to the success of the CSCE was the willingness of both NATO and Warsaw Pact states to participate. Indeed, that was the whole point of the process. Although there are useful contributions that a CSCE-like arrangement could make to the Gulf even if both Iran and Iraq stood outside it, its greatest contributions could only come from a process that included both of them.

Historically, states have maximized their own security in three different ways:

1. Increasing their own military capabilities;
2. Allying with other states to agglomerate greater military (and diplomatic and economic) power; or
3. Limiting the military power and/or aggressive intent of potential adversaries—by weakening those states, distracting them, forcing them to

fight on other fronts, appeasing them, be-friending them, or most recently by arms control treaties.

The GCC as an organization has done well in both the first and second approaches. The GCC has secured military support from the United States, which in turn has facilitated cooperation among the Gulf states and has helped each of the GCC countries improve its own military capabilities. However, the GCC as an organization does not lend itself to the third method of enhancing security largely because it does not include any of the countries that threaten the Gulf states. This is the same limitation that ASEAN suffers from. Consequently, if the Gulf states are looking for a qualitative increase in their security from a new regional security architecture, the obvious area in which to seek that increase lies in limiting the military power and/or hostile intent of the GCC’s most likely potential adversaries.

The Gulf region desperately needs confidence-building measures, agreements to diminish the likelihood of clashes (including inadvertent clashes), mechanisms to resolve conflict short of violence, and (eventually) arms control agreements. The Gulf region has none of these things, despite the fact that they are the steps

that would have the greatest impact on the overall security and stability of the region (especially given how far the GCC has already gone toward dealing with regional stability to the extent that any regional alliance can). But confidence-building, avoidance of inadvertent clashes, conflict resolution, and arms control can only be pursued with the states that threaten the GCC. If Iran and Iraq are excluded from such a regional security structure, it would make little sense to use that framework to take such steps. Consequently, the ideal structure would be one in which Iran and Iraq as well as the six members of the GCC all participated.

Ultimately, both Iran and Iraq might balk if invited to join such a forum. That would still be a preferable outcome to refusing to bring them in. If the stated purpose of the association were to enhance the security of all of the member states, reduce the potential for conflict, limit expenditures on arms, and otherwise increase the tranquility of the Gulf region, and Iran and/or Iraq still refused to participate, they would look very bad in the eyes of the international community, and possibly their own people as well. Their refusal to participate would

*The key to the success of the CSCE was the willingness of both NATO and Warsaw Pact states to participate.*



become evidence of malign intent to a great many and would bolster international support for the Gulf states against them.

Second, especially if the United States were also part of such a security condominium (see below), both Iran and Iraq would have considerable incentives to join. Iraq because this would create an international mechanism to retain a security relationship with the United States, which a great many Iraqis seek but their current surfeit of nationalist sentiment has made difficult. A broader security structure might furnish a different mechanism for U.S.-Iraqi cooperation that would be more palatable in Iraq's overheated political debates. For their part, the Iranians might see the new security condominium as an American trap, but over time would hopefully come to realize that it is their best (indeed, their only) way to have any influence on the deployment and behavior of American forces in the Gulf—which is Iran's single greatest external threat. In particular, the Iranians might come to recognize the value of a CFE-style arms control treaty that would place parameters around American military moves and limit the size of American forces in and around the Gulf, something that would only be possible within the context of a CSCE-like process for the region. As a result, over time, they might change their minds.

*The Iranians might come to recognize the value of a CFE-style arms control treaty that would place parameters around American military moves and limit the size of American forces in and around the Gulf*

### Any Other State with a Real Stake in Gulf Security Should Also Be Included

This is where a CSCE-style security condominium for the Gulf gets complicated. As noted above, the Gulf is a self-contained (although unstable) security system. Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE all see one another as their principal security partners and threats, and none of their other neighbors fall into the same categories to the same extent. The Gulf states are all strategically oriented toward the Gulf, and their other borders are of lesser concern. Moreover, as addressed in the discussion of the pros and cons of bringing other states into the GCC, almost any other country added to this list would bring in its security concerns related to other parts of the world which have nothing to do with the Gulf; this could severely complicate, and therefore undermine, the functioning of a CSCE-like process for the Gulf by contaminating the security issues of the Gulf with extraneous (and potentially unsolvable) security problems from other parts of the world. As a result, the question of bringing in other

countries to a Gulf security process should be treated extremely carefully.

### States Better Left Out

Some states probably ought to be excluded because they would contribute little and would impose a price too high to justify what little benefit they might bring.

**Israel.** Israel should have absolutely no part in a Gulf security condominium. While Israel and Iran have important security problems between them, adding the Jewish state to a Gulf security organization would impossibly complicate the organization's workings by introducing into it the plague of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This problem has been the bane of prior security cooperation proposals (particularly the Madrid process's Arms Control and Regional Security talks—ACRS—in the 1990s) and it would undoubtedly destroy the ability of the Gulf states to agree on anything or make anything workable. While it would be useful to establish some other international channel for Israel and Iran to discuss their security problems, trying to shoehorn that issue into a Gulf security process would simply prevent it from addressing the many other issues among the Gulf states that potentially could be ameliorated or even solved.<sup>3</sup>

**Pakistan.** Pakistan falls into a similar category. Pakistan has almost no security interests in the Gulf, and is not even terribly concerned about Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. The Gulf states are only interested in having Pakistan involved as a potential nuclear balance to Iran. However, because Pakistan's security obsession is with India and South Asia, it would add little to Gulf security and would inevitably mean complicating purely Gulf security questions with unrelated South Asian security problems.

**Egypt.** Egypt has even less to recommend its inclusion than Israel and Pakistan. Egypt has zero security interests in the Gulf, zero ability to project power there, and therefore zero relevance to it. Egypt's security concerns lie with the Levant, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the stability of Sudan—none of which have anything to do with the Gulf. If Egypt were included in a Gulf security process it would doubtless insist on dragging the Arab-Israeli conflict in and so paralyzing the process, as it did with ACRS.

**Morocco.** Morocco falls into a somewhat similar category as Egypt. Although the Moroccans might be less inclined to insist that the organization address the Arab-Israeli conflict first and foremost as the Egyptians traditionally have, they have zero security interests in the Gulf and no capability (or desire) to project power there. Bringing them in would inevitably mean bringing in the extraneous problems of North Africa.

### States Worth Considering

Though they would bring complications, it is worth weighing the benefits that some other states would bring to a CSCE-style security condominium.

**Jordan.** Relying on these same criteria—the benefits of inclusion versus the costs—Jordan would be better excluded, but at least some case can be made for its inclusion. Jordan’s external security threats lie to its north and west, not east. Including it could easily mean dragging the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Lebanese conflict, and now the Syrian mess into unrelated conversations about how to improve security in the Gulf. Jordan has only a very limited capacity to project power into the Gulf or even aid (or threaten) the states of the Gulf region. Nevertheless, because it does border Iraq and Saudi Arabia and could suffer from instability or conflict between them, a weak case can be made for Jordan’s inclusion.

**Turkey.** For the reasons enumerated above related to Turkey’s potential admission to the GCC, Ankara could be an excellent invitee to a Gulf security condominium modeled on the CSCE. Turkey has significant strategic interests in the Gulf (and particularly toward Iran and Iraq). It also has a significant capacity to project power into both Iran and Iraq. Moreover, while Turkey certainly has security concerns related to Greece and Syria, its participation in the CSCE suggests that the Turks will be able to keep those various interests separate and play a constructive role in a new Gulf security architecture.

**The United States.** To a certain extent, America’s participation in such a new, CSCE-style process would be more important than almost any other state, potentially even Iran. The Gulf states face a critical dilemma related to the United States: on the one hand, they desperately want to be able to rely on the United States to defend them against all external threats, particularly a nuclear armed Iran, but they fear that the American public would never be willing to risk Chicago to protect Riyadh. On the other hand, their dependence on the United States is resented in important circles of the Gulf, particularly among various communities in Saudi Arabia

thereby creating tensions (at times exaggerated) in the relationship and the deployment of American forces in the region. Moreover, because Iran is principally threatened by the United States and not the Gulf states at all, securing Tehran’s participation might require American participation as well—after all, why should the Iranians agree to limitations on its military activities and deployments if the United States is not bound by the same terms?

Consequently, American participation in a CSCE-style process for the Gulf is effectively as critical as it was in the actual CSCE-process in Europe. Because so much of Gulf security rests on the United States, not having Washington participate in such a conference would effectively undermine the entire organization and anything it agreed to. Without the United States, conversations among the members would be artificial and divorced from reality. Only with Washington participating could it possibly have any meaningful impact. Moreover, American participation in a region-wide security condominium might help legitimate the American military presence in the Gulf with the more reluctant populations there.

**China.** China’s interest in the Gulf region is expanding apace with its demand for Gulf hydrocarbons. Its economic investments have similarly ballooned in recent decades. China’s maturing arms industry and its growing air and naval power will undoubtedly give China a growing capacity to project power into the region in the years ahead. For all of these reasons, some states of the region are already looking to China as a potential superpower counterweight to the United States there. All of this argues strongly for including China in a Gulf region security condominium. Ultimately, it is about treating China in the same fashion as the United States because China has the potential to play a similar role to the United States. Indeed, excluding China could fatally compromise such an organization because China has the economic and political strength (and will likely eventually have the military strength) to hamstring or destroy any agreement among the states of the Gulf region that does not suit its own interests.

**The P-5.** It may be difficult to include only the United States, or only the United States and China. It might look like blatant pandering to the mighty. While the lessons of CSCE and ASEAN are that the only security associations that work are those that actually reflect power realities and not politically correct fantasies, it may still be politically painful to bow to those realities. Thus, if a political face-saving approach is needed to

justify the presence of the United States and China in a new Gulf security architecture, one way to do that would be to invite all five of the permanent members of the UN Security Council to participate. This would provide political cover for both the United States and China, and would also bring in Britain and France, who might also play constructive roles. Russia has virtually no interest in Gulf security issues and has shown itself willing to act like a major spoiler (particularly with regard to the Iranian nuclear program in recent years), which at first glance ought to disqualify it from participating. However, a case can be made that because Russia has been willing to play the spoiler, it needs to be part of the process so that it too is bound by any decisions made and cannot undermine them from the outside.

**India.** The last country that ought to be considered for inclusion in its own right is India. India already sees itself as China's budding rival. It shares China's interest in Gulf hydrocarbon exports, and it is far more explicitly attempting to develop the air and sea capabilities to dominate the Indian ocean and project power all along its periphery—including the Arabian Sea and the Gulf. Moreover, unlike Pakistan, India can probably be counted on to keep the problems of South Asia distinct from the problems of the Gulf. As a practical matter, therefore, it would probably be in the long-term interests of the Gulf states to include India in a future CSCE-like security condominium.

However, doing so may not be without its costs. First, since India is not a member of the P-5, it may be somewhat more difficult to justify its inclusion without being honest about the criteria for inclusion. Second, China might object simply because the Indians are so open about their rivalry with China. Third, there is some risk that India will conflate its problems with Pakistan and Afghanistan with the security of the Gulf region itself—especially if a new Gulf security architecture works well and New Delhi wants to “hijack” it to use it to deal with the problems of South Asia.

### **The Limits of the Structure**

It will be critical to keep in mind that even a new, CSCE-like framework for the Gulf would not solve all of the

region's problems by itself. Such a new architecture would merely be a mechanism to facilitate actions that would be harder without it. It would still require all of the member states to be willing to accept compromises on their own security actions in return for their adversaries doing the same. If a state is simply unwilling to make any concession related to its activities to defend its security, then it cannot expect much, if anything from this mechanism because other states would likely be just as reluctant to make compromises of their own.

Nevertheless, the hope would be that, based on the CSCE experience, over time, even extremely suspicious—even paranoid—states would eventually be willing to make such compromises in order to promote transparency and build confidence, perhaps slowly and grudgingly at first, but more expansively and rapidly over time as the state sees the benefits of doing so. And certainly it would be much, much harder to get such states to make such moves in the absence of this kind of framework.

For that reason, a new Gulf security condominium modeled on the CSCE and as a complement to the GCC, would not be a quick fix to the deepening security problems of the region. In the short term it can certainly change the atmosphere by pushing states to think in a more cooperative vein. It can also offer hope that the situation will improve in the future and states often make decisions about current behavior based on expectations of what the future will bring. However, as the CSCE demonstrated, bridging longstanding gaps of suspicion and misunderstanding, crafting meaningful agreements on confidence-building measures and arms control, and learning to deal with crises and conflicts through dialogue take a long time to take hold. States that have never engaged in such a process tend to operate according to Hobbesian rules and it takes time to convince them to trust the process and to trust one another—and this assumes that they were ultimately well-meaning and not predatory all along. Which is all to say that a CSCE-like security system for the Gulf will not be a panacea, but if there is a willingness on all sides to try, it could furnish an excellent path to a more peaceful and secure Persian Gulf for all.

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<sup>1</sup> A framework that ensures that a new security architecture for the Gulf makes the states of the region safer than they already are should also include measures that account for the potential impact on the internal security of these states as well. There is no point devising new arrangements to guard against external threat if those measures produce internal collapse.

<sup>2</sup> The author would like to thank Ambassador Steven Pifer and Dr. Jonathan Pollack for their exceptionally helpful comments related to the functioning of the ASEAN and CSCE/OSCE security organizations.

<sup>3</sup> The Iranians might demand that Israel be included, either as a ploy to justify their not participating until Israel agreed to do so, or simply because they really believe that Israel should be a part of any conversation related to their security. It should be possible to gently, but very firmly, deny this request. It is not necessary for every country's every threat to be included. China was one of Russia's greatest threats by the 1970s, but China was purposely excluded from the CSCE process (and the CSBMs and the CFE treaty) because bringing China in would have meant having to address the complicated security problems of East Asia, something none of the European countries, nor the Russians nor the Americans, wanted because doing so could only hamstring any progress that might be made related to Europe. The same arguments should be used for any Iranian demands for Israeli inclusion.

