

5. The greater Middle East

ROSEMARY HOLLIS

I. Introduction

Although it is strongly interdependent with the rest of the world in the supply of energy, the greater Middle East region has been little penetrated by ‘globalizing’ trends, especially those that tend to emancipate the individual.¹ Most states of the region are of relatively recent creation, many borders are still disputed and interstate relations are generally of a brittle, competitive when not outright adversarial character. In 2004 the most potent conflicts in the region were over sovereignty in Iraq and between Israel and the Palestinians, although the repercussions are apparent beyond these nations’ borders and they are not the only sources of instability in the region. There are tensions or unresolved border issues outstanding between Iran and Iraq, between Iran and the small Arab states in the Persian Gulf region, and between Iran and Afghanistan. Syria remains technically at war with Israel and has come under mounting pressure from the United States—as well as from France, other European states, Israel, some Arab states and the United Nations (UN)—over its presence and conduct in Lebanon.

State structures and interstate relations are called into doubt not just by such governmental disputes but by the strength of transnational elements such as tribal connections, diasporas, sects and modern terrorist movements. During 2004 almost all the countries in the region experienced some sort of terrorist incident and, whether allied to the USA or not, all the regional governments share a fear of radical Islamist militants, either associated with or inspired by al-Qaeda. Many experts have depicted the USA’s long-term strategic presence in the region, and more specifically US policies in Iraq and with respect to the Palestinians, as aggravating the problem. At the strategic level, the possibility exists that Iran will develop a nuclear weapon capability and that the USA could take military action against it. As of early 2005, however, the US Administration was indicating a preference for a diplomatic solution to its differences with Iran.

Meanwhile, there has been an expansion of multilateral initiatives and engagements in the region. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has increased its role in both Afghanistan and Iraq and has offered to assist other states with military preparedness and performance, counter-terrorism,

¹ The greater Middle East is defined in this chapter as bounded by Turkey in the north and the Arabian Peninsula state of Yemen to the south, and stretching from Egypt, Israel and Lebanon in the west to Afghanistan in the east. In contrast to the term ‘broader Middle East’, as used by the United States and the Group of Eight (G8) industrialized nations, this definition does not include either Pakistan, on the one hand, or North Africa beyond Egypt, on the other.

border security and defence budgeting. The European Union (EU) launched a Strategic Partnership in 2004, offering help with economic development, security cooperation, political reform and counter-terrorism.² The USA is championing the cause of democratization and has re-engaged with Israel and the Palestinians in the name of a two-state solution to their conflict.

Section II of this chapter presents the general features of, and specific issues arising from, state-to-state security relations in the region. Section III examines phenomena, including core conflicts, that have a region-wide impact. The military balance in the region is discussed in section IV. Section V focuses on regionalism and cooperation and discusses the various multilateral organizations based elsewhere which have become involved in the greater Middle East. The conclusions are presented in section VI.

II. The state system and associated issues

States and identity

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I (1914–18), France and the United Kingdom were the principal architects of the carve-up of the Arab world into separate states and emirates, with each of them falling under the sway of one or other of these two colonial powers. New colonies were not, however, acceptable to the League of Nations, which gave the UK the newly created Mandates of Palestine (initially including modern-day Jordan) and Iraq, and France the mandatory authority for Syria (including Lebanon) on condition that they prepare these new entities for independence. In the case of Palestine the terms of the mandate required the UK to promote the establishment of a Jewish homeland while protecting the rights of the indigenous Arabs—with conflict the result.

The lines drawn on the map in the 1920s cut across established trading routes and commercial links, separated coastal ports from inland communities, and submerged pre-existing social, tribal, ethnic and sectarian identities in new national entities. Over the ensuing decades the leaders of the new states had to find ways to achieve legitimacy and distinguish themselves and their states, one from another. The Al Saud dynasty in Saudi Arabia chose to be allies and champions of the Wahhabi strand of Islam. In Syria and Iraq anti-imperialism became the rallying cry until full independence was achieved; later these regimes used Baathist pan-Arabist ideology to dress up minority rule. Egyptian President Gamal Adbul Nasser won regional influence as the leading proponent of Arab nationalism, dedicated to eliminating residual British and French influence in the region and reversing the Arab humiliation of 1948, when the establishment of the state of Israel betokened the defeat of Arab forces by the Zionist movement in Palestine.

² 'EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East', *Euromed Report*, no. 78 (23 June 2004), URL <europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/publication/2004/euromed_report_78_en.pdf>. See also the EU's Mediterranean and Middle East Policy Internet site at URL <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/med_mideast/intro/>.

If the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate and the triumph of European imperialism was the first 20th century crisis for the Arabs, their 1948 defeat in Palestine was the second, and their subsequent failure on the battlefield in 1967 the third. It was from that moment that the appeal of Islam began slowly to encroach on secular nationalism, although the experience of fighting Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s seems to have been the incubator for the most radical Salafist ideologues,³ many now associated with Osama bin Laden. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 came shortly after the fall of the Shah of Iran in a revolution which ended three decades of predominant US influence in Tehran. Iran became an Islamic republic, in this case the champion of Shia rather than Sunni Islam, and thus a rival to Saudi Wahhabism. The balance of the region's states was upset at the same time as the USA was obliged to seek new allies, bases and techniques for maintaining its strategic presence in the region—a search which arguably has culminated in, but still not been resolved by, the latest events in Iraq.

Iran and its Arab neighbours

Since agreeing the ceasefire that ended the 1980–88 Iraq–Iran War, the two countries have yet to sign a formal treaty delineating their mutual border. From an exchange of letters in 1990 between Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the latter concluded that Iraq had again accepted the 1975 Algiers Accord and its related protocols and agreements, delineating the border along the *thalweg* or median line of the Shatt al-Arab waterway.⁴ However, doubts persisted over the Iraqi commitment to that agreement, and the regime of Saddam Hussein was overthrown in 2003.⁵ A formal agreement must thus await the constitution of a new Iraqi government with full sovereign powers. Meanwhile, there are other issues still outstanding from the 1980–88 war, including prisoners of war and reparations. In August 2004 the kidnapers of an Iranian diplomat inside Iraq threatened to punish him if Iran did not release 500 prisoners whom it captured during the war.⁶ For its part, the Iranian Government has stated that it intends to pursue its claim to reparations from Iraq for damages sustained during the war.⁷

Once a fully constituted government is in place in Iraq it will also be expected to confirm the border with Kuwait announced by the UN Iraq–Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission in 1994. Its delineation was

³ See 'Salafi Islam', GlobalSecurity.org, URL <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-salafi.htm>>.

⁴ For the Algiers Accord see URL <<http://www.mideastweb.org/algiersaccord.htm>>. See also 'Keyhan-e Hava' publishes leaders letters', 26 Sep. and 3 Oct. 1990, BBC Survey of World Broadcasts, 1 Nov. 1990.

⁵ Schofield, R., 'Position, function and symbol: the Shatt al-Arab dispute in perspective', eds L. G. Potter and G. G. Sick, *Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2004), p. 64.

⁶ Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 'Iran minister, Iraq deputy premier discuss kidnapped diplomat', 29 Aug. 2004, URL <<http://www.irna.com/en/>>.

⁷ IRNA, 'Iran will press ahead for war reparations from Iraq: says Kharrazi', 20 Oct. 2004, URL <<http://www.irna.ir/irnewtest/en/news/view/line-17/0410200934184136.htm>>.

vociferously opposed by many of the Iraqi opposition groups whose members have surfaced in Iraq's interim and transitional governments because the boundary restricts Iraq's access to the headwaters of the Persian Gulf by recognizing Kuwaiti sovereignty over the approach channels to the port of Umm Qasr. A trilateral agreement will thus be needed between Iran, Iraq and Kuwait in order for peaceful development and environmental cooperation to go ahead in this contentious area.⁸

Reflecting its support for Iraq in the 1980–88 war, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—founded in 1981 by Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—has hitherto adopted a position on the Iraq–Iran border issue that is supportive of Iraqi sovereignty over the whole of the Shatt al-Arab.⁹ It remains to be seen how the GCC will respond to the need for a trilateral arrangement that reconciles Iranian, Iraqi and Kuwaiti claims. If these three states can find accommodation, presumably the GCC will acquiesce. However, if there is disagreement among the three, the GCC may side against Iran but will have to weigh the competing interests of GCC member Kuwait and its much bigger neighbour Iraq. To complicate matters, henceforward the Iraqi government will be dominated by Shia Arabs, and their ascendancy is being interpreted in other Arab capitals, not least Riyadh, as bolstering Iranian regional hegemony.

The stance of the GCC on Iran's dispute with the UAE over the lower Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs has been unequivocally in favour of the UAE. Iran rejects the GCC stance and claims sovereignty over all three islands.¹⁰ Iran has also objected publicly to backing for the UAE claim by the Arab League.¹¹ GCC and Arab League solidarity with the UAE against Iran is not new and can be expected to continue. Meanwhile, an Iranian parliamentarian has suggested that the USA was behind an incident involving an Iranian fishing vessel that was intercepted by a UAE ship near Abu Musa in mid-2004.¹² The Iranian Government maintains that 'misunderstandings' over implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Iran and Sharjah (now in the UAE) in 1971 on the status of the islands should be dealt with through bilateral talks between Iran and the UAE. Such talks have been held, and in early 2005 the Iranian Foreign Ministry called for them to continue under the new presidency of the UAE (Sheikh Khalifah bin Zayed al-Nahyan succeeded his father, Shiekh Zayed bin Sultan

⁸ Schofield (note 5), pp. 30–31.

⁹ On the GCC (Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf) and its membership see the glossary in this volume.

¹⁰ Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 'Iran rejects Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union statement as unacceptable', BBC Monitoring, 3 Mar. 2004, (in Persian); IRNA, 'Iran Foreign Ministry says GCC statement on islands "totally unacceptable"', 21 Dec. 2004, URL <<http://www.irna.com/en/>>; IRNA, 'Iran dismisses latest support for UAE claims to disputed islands', BBC Monitoring, 14 Mar. 2005; and IRNA, 'Foreign Ministry spokesman says Persian Gulf islands, integral parts of Iran', BBC Monitoring, 6 Apr. 2005.

¹¹ IRNA, 'Iran rejects Arab League statement on disputed islands', 24 May 2004, URL <<http://www.irna.com/en/>>. On the League of Arab States and its membership see the glossary in this volume.

¹² Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA), 'Iran MP says GCC statement on islands, attack on boat, "planned elsewhere"', BBC Monitoring, 7 June 2004 (in Persian).

al-Nahyan, as president in November 2004), at the same time as it objected to 'allegations' made by the UAE deputy prime minister and deputy foreign minister in a UAE daily newspaper.¹³

Developments in Iraq have also complicated the picture by reordering the relative fortunes of Iraqi Shia and Sunni Arabs and hence calling into question Iraq's traditional role as a secular/Sunni Arab bulwark against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The ramifications are already being played out in the GCC, with the Kuwaiti Government objecting to a meeting held in May 2004 between the Iranian ambassador to Kuwait and members of the Kuwaiti Shia community and Iran objecting in turn to hostile comments in the Kuwaiti press.¹⁴ Tensions also surfaced between Iran and Qatar after the Qatari Navy engaged an Iranian fishing boat which Qatar claimed had entered its territorial waters,¹⁵ although escalation was avoided.

On a more positive note, in February 2005 Iran and the UAE agreed to strengthen their cooperation on environmental issues, especially protection of marine life and eradication of sea pollution,¹⁶ and called for closer cooperation on economic issues.¹⁷ Iran has also been pursuing closer trade links with Bahrain, where the population is predominantly Shia, although the ruling family is Sunni, but at the beginning of December 2004 the Bahraini Information Minister called on Iran not to interfere in his country's domestic affairs.¹⁸ Iran's dealings with Oman have meanwhile proceeded on a relatively cooperative basis and President Mohammad Khatami made an official visit to Muscat in October 2004 at the invitation of Sultan Qaboos.

Afghanistan and Iran

Since the USA mounted its essentially unilateralist intervention in Afghanistan in pursuit of Osama bin Laden and his Taliban hosts in 2001, Afghanistan has become a new testing ground for a combination of NATO forces, the putative multinational force unit of the EU, Eurocorps,¹⁹ and US force structures. Both the 9000-strong NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the centre and north of the country and the 18 000 US troops pursuing the Taliban remnants and al-Qaeda in the south have come in for criticism for failing to achieve their goals.²⁰ Towards the end of 2004 there was disagreement

¹³ IRNA, 'Foreign ministry spokesman says Persian Gulf islands integral parts of Iran', BBC Monitoring, 6 Apr. 2005.

¹⁴ IRNA, 'Kuwaiti premier's senior adviser meets Iran's envoy', BBC Monitoring, 13 May 2004.

¹⁵ IRNA, 'Iran sends "blunt warning" to Qatar over fishing boats attack', 13 June 2004, URL <<http://www.irna.com/en/>>; 'Iran seizes two Qatar boats in latest Gulf dispute', Khaleej Times Online, URL <<http://www.khaleejtimes.com>>; and 'Iranian security forces detain 22 UAE fishermen', Radio farda.com, URL <<http://www.radiofarda.com>>.

¹⁶ IRNA, 'Iran and UAE strengthen environment cooperation', BBC Monitoring, 2 Feb. 2005.

¹⁷ IRNA, 'Iran, UAE discuss bilateral, regional ties', BBC Monitoring, 7 Feb. 2005.

¹⁸ MENA News Agency (Cairo), 'Bahrain asks Iran not to "interfere", denies delaying GCC summit', BBC Monitoring, 1 Dec. 2004.

¹⁹ See the Eurocorps Internet site at URL <<http://www.eurocorps.org>>. On the missions in Afghanistan see chapter 3 in this volume, especially table 3.2.

²⁰ Girardet, E., 'The west must not let Afghanistan down again', *Financial Times*, 5 Oct. 2004, p. 15; and Risen, J. and Rohde, D., 'Hunt for bin Laden is stymied in the wilds of Pakistan', *International Herald Tribune*, 14 Dec. 2004, p. 7.

in NATO over US proposals that the forces be amalgamated under NATO and thence, potentially, US command.²¹ However, when they met in February 2005 NATO defence ministers did agree in principle to place all Western troops in Afghanistan under NATO command, although the modalities and timetable had still to be worked out. Expectations are that the transition will be completed by the time the UK is due to assume command of the NATO forces in Afghanistan in February 2006.²²

At stake is more than the question of the US role in NATO. Of concern is how to combine a peacekeeping operation with a war-fighting one. A parallel problem emerged on the question of aid disbursement, when the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), having operated in Afghanistan for many years, decided to withdraw. MSF, like some other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), feared for both the safety of its personnel and the feasibility of its operations. The use of aid distribution by US forces as a tool for securing the cooperation of the local population undermined the ability of humanitarian workers to operate as neutral providers of care and development assistance.

The Afghan presidential elections in October 2004, organized and monitored under UN auspices, did go forward in a manner deemed sufficiently free and fair to constitute a positive development on the path to restoring internal stability. The victor, President Hamid Karzai, curbed the power of some of the warlords who represent a challenge to central authority.²³ Yet the re-emergence of wide-scale opium production and a thriving drugs trade remains a threat to the future development of the country and security operations.²⁴

Drug trafficking across the border into Iran has long been a concern for the Iranian authorities. According to Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, some 4000 officials of the various Iranian counter-narcotics agencies have lost their lives in combating the problem.²⁵ Cooperation with the authorities in Kabul on countering the illicit trade is among the security issues that have featured in bilateral Afghan–Iranian relations. Policing their mutual border is another issue, and in March 2004 it was announced that 10 new border checkpoints had been opened as part of a plan to construct 25 in total (15 in Herat, 3 in Farah and 7 in the Nimroz provinces of Afghanistan).²⁶ The issue of Afghan refugees in Iran also affects Afghan–Iranian relations. Some Afghans have voiced their appreciation for Iranian assistance to refugees during the years of conflict in Afghanistan, while others criticize Iran for exploiting them

²¹ Dombey, D., Koch, R. and Burnett, V., 'Differences over Afghan roles clouds Nato talks', *Financial Times*, 14 Oct. 2004, p. 7. See also chapter 1 in this volume.

²² Spiegel, P., 'Nato gets all-clear to assume full Afghan command', *Financial Times*, 11 Feb. 2005, p. 2; and Dempsey, J., '2 Afghanistan missions to merge', *International Herald Tribune*, 11 Feb. 2005, p. 2.

²³ Associated Press, 'Warlords lose power in new Karzai cabinet', *International Herald Tribune*, 24–26 Dec. 2004., p. 5.

²⁴ Walsh, D., 'Karzai victory plants seeds of hope in fight to kick Afghan opium habit', *The Guardian*, 1 Jan. 2005. See also chapter 3 in this volume.

²⁵ Afghanistan Television (Kabul), 'Afghan president, Iranian foreign minister discuss narcotics, ties', BBC Monitoring South Asia, 7 Dec. 2004 (in Dari).

²⁶ Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Mashhad), 'Iran to build more checkpoints along Afghan border', BBC Monitoring, 12 Mar. 2004 (in Dari).

to gain financial aid from the UN and other bodies.²⁷ In any case, under an agreement with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a process of repatriation is under way and the Iranian authorities are no longer willing to receive new refugees.

Iran has pledged to spend \$250 million on development and construction projects in Afghanistan, including roads and a railway link. The possibility of Iranian involvement in training Afghan army officers was also discussed in early 2005. Relations at the government level appear to be more than formally correct, with Iran not only backing the basic law adopted by the Afghan Loya Jirga (Grand Council) in January 2004, but also supporting the subsequent election of President Kharzai, who made an official visit to Tehran in January 2005 at the head of a high-ranking political and economic delegation.

The Arab Gulf states

Rivalries between the member states of the GCC did not pose a significant problem in 2004 since most border disputes had been settled in recent years. However, the Qatari Government continued to cause irritation in other Arab capitals with some of its policy pronouncements, which not only embrace the US agenda for political and educational reform in the region, but also make other states look less responsive by comparison. Most irritating to other states in the region, however, is the critical news coverage of the satellite television channel Al Jazeera, which is based in Doha.

Qatar, in common with the other smaller member states of the GCC, can nevertheless still rely on its close relations with the USA to shield it from overbearing pressure from its principal critic, Saudi Arabia. This factor, together with the Saudi rulers' preoccupations with their own internal security concerns, has recently produced a shift away from the erstwhile predominance of Saudi Arabia in the internal power balance in the GCC. The question of the GCC's as yet unrealized potential to develop into a collective security structure is raised below.

Syria

Syria is still officially at war with Israel, and Syrian proposals that peace talks be resumed have been rebuffed by Israel, pending Syrian action to curb Palestinian militant groups and end the Syrian presence in Lebanon. In November 2003 Israel conducted an air attack on a site not far from Damascus, which Israel claimed housed Palestinian terrorist groups. Skirmishes continued between the Lebanese Hezbollah and Israel in the disputed border area (between Syria, Lebanon and Israel) known as Shebaa Farms. Syria—like Iran—has been repeatedly criticized by the USA, Israel and some

²⁷ Balkh Television (Mazar-e Sharif), 'North Afghan party official, Iranian envoy hail ties', BBC Monitoring, 23 May 2004 (in Dari); and Herat News Centre, 'Afghan agency criticises treatment of Afghan refugees by Iran', BBC Monitoring South Asia, 9 Jan. 2005 (in Dari).

European states for giving support to Hezbollah in Lebanon and to the Palestinian Islamist movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad. In May 2004 the Administration of President George W. Bush activated sanctions on Syria called for under the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, passed by the US Congress at the end of 2003.²⁸

The Syrian presence in Lebanon, sanctioned by the Taif Agreement of 1989, which brought the Lebanese civil war to a close, was partially justified by Syria at the time on the basis of the Israeli occupation of the south of Lebanon.²⁹ Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000 and UN Security Council Resolution 1559,³⁰ sponsored by France and the USA, called for the Syrian troops (which then numbered around 14 000) to withdraw from Lebanon, as well as the disarming of Hezbollah and Palestinian militias there, and deployment of the Lebanese Army to the border with Israel. In his State of the Union Address on 2 February 2005 US President Bush stated: 'Syria still allows its territory, and parts of Lebanon, to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region'. He added that his administration expected the Syrian Government to 'end all support for terror and open the door to freedom'.³¹ The same month the Israeli Defence Minister implicated Syria in a suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv for which a branch of Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

Matters came to a head on 14 February 2005 when former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was assassinated in a bomb attack in Beirut. His funeral turned into a mass protest, uniting different Lebanese factions, against Syria. Members of the Lebanese opposition to the Syrian-backed government of President Emile Lahoud accused Syria of masterminding the assassination and the USA withdrew its ambassador to Syria and joined France and the UN in calling for a full investigation.³² Although Syria denied culpability, it removed 3000 of its troops from Lebanon almost immediately.³³ Thereafter Syria reached agreement with UN envoy Terje Roed Larsen on a timetable for full withdrawal, which was completed by the end of April 2005.³⁴ Meanwhile, in the face of mass demonstrations in support of Hezbollah in Lebanon, President Bush somewhat modified his previous line on the organization, calling for it to lay down arms and confine its activities to the political sphere.³⁵

²⁸ Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, 12 Dec. 2003, URL <www.fas.org/asmp/resources/govern/108th/pl_108_175.pdf>; and US Department of State, 'Sanctions on Syria: implementing the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003', 11 May 2004, URL <<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/32396.htm>>.

²⁹ For the Taif Agreement see URL <<http://www.mideastinfo.com/documents/taif.htm>>.

³⁰ UN Security Council Resolution 1559, 2 Sep. 2004, URL <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions04.html>.

³¹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'State of the Union Address', Washington, DC, 29 Jan. 2005, URL <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>>.

³² 'Lebanon will work with UN', *International Herald Tribune*, 21 Feb. 2005, p. 5.

³³ Khalaf, R., 'Lebanon to move Syrian troops to ease crisis', *Financial Times*, 25 Feb. 2005, p. 5.

³⁴ Wallis, W. and Khalaf, R., 'Syria to pull out of Lebanon "by end of month"', *Financial Times*, 3 Apr. 2005.

³⁵ 'Bush: Hezbollah could enter Lebanon's political mainstream', CNN.com, 15 Mar. 2005, URL <<http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/03/15/bush.hezbollah/>>.

Turkey

In 2004 fears that Turkey might intervene in northern Iraq to counter the emergence of separatist tendencies in Iraqi Kurdistan proved baseless, averted by diplomatic contacts across the border. The USA abandoned all hope of involving Turkish troops in the multinational coalition in Iraq, in the face of both Kurdish and Arab opposition. Instead, 2004 witnessed an improvement in relations between Turkey and both Iran and Syria. The three countries share borders and interests, including not wanting to see Iraq fragment or Kurdish nationalism threaten their own national cohesion. In addition, the fact that the Turkish Parliament had voted against allowing the USA to use Turkey as a second front for the invasion of Iraq in March 2003³⁶ paved the way for improved Arab–Turkish and Iranian–Turkish relations, even if it caused some dismay in Washington. Since those events, official Turkish–US relations have recovered somewhat, although not to the level of intimacy characteristic of the cold war years. Turkey’s alliance with Israel remains in place but is pursued with less enthusiasm by Turkey than was the pattern in the 1990s.

Circumstances have changed, and with the rise to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Turkish democracy has brought an end to the dominance of the overtly secular elite, backed by the military. Contrary to various theories about how a government with conservative Islamic values would behave, throughout 2004 the AKP leadership lobbied enthusiastically for full membership of the EU.³⁷ The USA backs Turkey’s EU aspirations and gave strong support to Turkey’s bid to gain candidate status for EU membership. Despite nervousness and some overt opposition in Europe, this goal was achieved by December 2004, albeit subject to strict criteria for actual entry.³⁸

Egypt and Jordan

Developments on the Israeli–Palestinian front³⁹ following the death of Yasser Arafat, Palestinian Authority (PA) President and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in November 2004, opened a window for renewed peace moves and Egypt took that opportunity to improve its relations with Israel. Having earlier launched an initiative to withdraw Israeli settlements and troops from Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has posited a role for Egypt in assisting the Palestinians with internal and border security as and when an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza takes place, and Egypt is taking up the challenge. Following in Jordan’s footsteps, in December 2004 Egypt also signed a trilateral agreement with Israel and the USA to facilitate access to US

³⁶ See also chapter 1 in this volume; and Cottey, A., ‘The Iraq war: the enduring controversies and challenges’, *SIPRI Yearbook 2004: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004), pp. 67–93.

³⁷ Boland, V., ‘European Union candidacy: “Turkey is becoming a re-religious society and trying to join a post-religious Europe”’, *Financial Times*, 5 Oct. 2004, p. 13.

³⁸ See the discussion of EU enlargement in chapter 1 in this volume.

³⁹ This subject is discussed more fully in the next section.

markets for goods made, with Israeli input, in their qualified industrial zones (QIFs).⁴⁰

In early 2005 Egypt invited Sharon and newly elected Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to a summit meeting in Sharm al Sheikh, also attended by Jordan. The summit produced a handshake between Sharon and Abbas and a pledge to revive the peace process.

For its part, Jordan has embarked on a major programme of administrative, political and economic reform, headed up by Marwan Muasher, former Foreign Minister and now Minister in the Royal Court. As he argues plausibly, this is needed to tackle problems of unemployment and structural dysfunction, but it will run up against vested interests and may cause popular discontent before it delivers the intended benefits.⁴¹ Jordan's principal problem, as discussed below, remains its vulnerable location, caught between the Israeli–Palestinian conflict on the one hand and the Iraqi maelstrom on the other.

III. Region-wide and transnational challenges

Section II illustrates how a core group of issues that combine security impact with political and normative resonance—the USA's presence and policies, the unresolved Israeli–Palestinian conflict and now also the spillover from the Iraq conflict—complicate both state-to-state relations and internal security for virtually every state in the region. These issues, themselves interrelated, are further examined in this section together with the 'new threat' (not so new in the Middle East) of terrorism.

The role of the United States

The US reaction to the 1978–79 Iranian revolution and the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was to create a military capability to intervene directly in the Persian Gulf region, having previously relied first on the UK to police the sea lanes and thence protect the free flow of oil and then, after the British withdrawal of forces 'East of Suez' in 1971, on the Shah and the Al Saud dynasty as 'proxy policemen'.⁴² From these early beginnings evolved the US Central Command (CENTCOM) with an Area of Responsibility (AOR) covering Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the GCC states, plus Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the Horn of Africa.⁴³ Direct US involvement in Persian Gulf security arrangements increased during the Iraq–Iran War but took on a new order of magnitude in the 1991 Gulf War to reverse the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

After the Gulf War the vast majority of the US forces deployed for Operation Desert Storm left the area, but a residual presence was retained in

⁴⁰ Saleh, H., 'Trade deal helps thaw for Israel and Egypt', *Financial Times*, 15 Dec. 2004, p. 6.

⁴¹ Abdallah, S., 'Jordan: new cabinet', *Middle East International*, no. 737 (5 Nov. 2004).

⁴² Potter and Sick eds (note 5).

⁴³ See the CENTCOM AOR Internet site at URL <<http://www.centcom.mil/aboutus/aor.htm>>.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other GCC states, as well as at sea (a new Fifth Fleet was created and headquartered in Bahrain). The US Air Force (with British and, for a time, French support) policed no-fly zones over southern and northern Iraq and, along with some amphibious assault forces and the US Navy, maintained a forward presence to contain both Iran and Iraq under the policy known as ‘dual containment’. Defence agreements were forged with each of the GCC states, joint exercises conducted with the indigenous forces and arms supplied to enhance their capabilities. Regular exercises were also conducted with the armed forces of Egypt and Jordan, with Egypt receiving a regular disbursement of US military and civilian aid through an arrangement dating from the Egyptian–Israeli Peace Treaty of 1979.⁴⁴

The extent of the US involvement in Gulf security arrangements in the 1990s was such that former White House official Gary Sick portrayed the USA as a regional power rather than simply an external influence.⁴⁵ Dual containment, underpinned by UN sanctions on Iraq and unilateral US sanctions on Iran, effectively determined the oil fortunes of Iran and Iraq. Iraq could not legally export oil at all (except for a UN-sanctioned dispensation for supplies to Jordan) until the oil-for-food programme was agreed in 1996,⁴⁶ while commercial companies and governments were deterred from investing in the Iranian energy sector. Saudi Arabia was the principal beneficiary, doubling its oil output in the early 1990s to make up the shortfall left by Iraq.

Antipathy to the US presence on the Arabian Peninsula, in Saudi Arabia in particular, was one of the grievances against the USA and the Al Saud family propagated by Osama bin Laden, long before the attacks on the USA of 11 September 2001. Although not directly attributed to bin Laden, there were bomb attacks on US military personnel at Al Khobar, in Ash Sharqiyah (Eastern Province), Saudi Arabia in June 1996—causing a redeployment of those forces to a new base in the desert, at Al Kharj—and also on the office of a military liaison team in Riyadh. The USS *Cole* was the target of an attack in the Yemeni port of Aden in October 2000. Meanwhile, US CENTCOM developed a posture and strategy in the Persian Gulf to protect US interests, the first of which was defined as the security of oil supplies.

The US military had become part of the landscape in the Persian Gulf and the access agreements forged with the GCC states in the 1990s provided a platform for deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq after 11 September 2001.⁴⁷ Viewed from the region, however, the US presence can be and is interpreted as foreign intervention in support of both US interests and friendly gov-

⁴⁴ For the treaty see URL <<http://www.mideastweb.org/egyptisrael treaty.htm>>.

⁴⁵ Sick, G., ‘U.S. policy in the Gulf: objectives and prospects’, ed. R. Hollis, *Managing New Developments in the Gulf* (Royal Institute of International Affairs: London, 2000).

⁴⁶ On the oil-for-food programme see chapter 13 in this volume.

⁴⁷ Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, an estimated 7000 US troops and aircraft previously deployed for ‘operation Southern Watch’ over southern Iraq were removed from Saudi Arabia and redeployed to new headquarters in Qatar. Kirk, C., ‘American troops to leave Saudi Arabia’, 5 May 2003, URL <<http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/Archive>>; and Saudi–US Relations Information Service Mission complete: Operation Southern Watch forces in Saudi Arabia deactivated’, 30 Aug. 2003, URL <<http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/newsletter/saudi-relations-interest-8-30.html>>.

ernments, and not necessarily in the interests of the people in the region. Interpreted through the prism of historical experience and the machinations of the European states in the 20th century, it is depicted as a new form of imperialism. Across the Arab world, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was received in this light and even the governments close to the USA warned against it, for fear of the unravelling of the regional order. Whether or not the USA will retain military bases in Iraq after it withdraws from a conflict role there—and on what terms—remains an issue of keen interest to local observers in this context.

The Arab–Israeli divide and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict

On the Arab–Israeli front, the second Palestinian uprising, or intifada, against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day Arab–Israeli War) entered its fifth year. In the second half of 2004 there was a marked decline in the incidence of suicide attacks by Palestinians on Israelis, which Israel would claim was due to the effectiveness of its military strategy and the construction of the ‘barrier’ between Israel and Palestinian population centres in the West Bank. In Gaza, Palestinian militants resorted to rocket attacks across the border fence with Israel, while the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) mounted a series of operations designed to secure the border areas and demolish buildings and vegetation used as cover by Palestinian gunmen.

By the end of 2004 divisions were apparent in the Palestinian community over how best to pursue their quest for independence. The militant groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade had suffered many casualties from Israel’s ‘targeting killings’ of their leaders in the West Bank and Gaza. Basic economic, social and political activity in the Palestinian community had been severely disrupted by Israeli security measures, such as internal closures and installation of checkpoints between Palestinian population centres. The Palestinian police force had virtually ceased functioning, leaving ordinary citizens at risk from lawlessness as well as the armed struggle. Meanwhile, even though sympathy for the Palestinian cause had increased across the Arab world, Arab governments offered only criticism of Israel and calls for a resumption of peace efforts.

Peacemaking

Until the death of Arafat in November 2004, the Israeli Government repeated its contention that there was no Palestinian peace partner and blamed Arafat for encouraging and permitting Palestinian terrorism. It had officially accepted the ‘road map’ devised in 2002 by the Quartet (the EU, Russia, the UN and the USA) and launched in 2003 as the official approach to reviving peace negotia-

tions by EU member states, the USA and some Arab governments.⁴⁸ However, Sharon made implementation of the road map dependent on the PA halting the use of violence against Israelis, disarming and arresting militants, and dismantling 'the terror network'. In late 2003 Sharon indicated that, in the absence of a partner for peace, he was developing a unilateral initiative.

The formulation of Sharon's disengagement plan proceeded along with the accelerated construction of the barrier in 2004. In April 2004, in an exchange of letters with President Bush, Sharon secured his acceptance that in any future peace agreement Israel would not be expected to give up the main Israeli settlement blocs in the West Bank and that Palestinian refugees could not expect to exercise the 'right of return' to anywhere inside Israel.⁴⁹ The USA was also sympathetic to Israel's construction of the security barrier, irrespective of an opinion reached in 2004 by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that the route of the barrier contravened international law.⁵⁰

However, Arafat's death enabled the USA to argue that the main obstacle to peace had gone. Following the elections held throughout the Palestinian territories with an approximately 65 per cent turnout on 30 January 2005, Sharon declared himself ready to deal with the new Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, although he stressed the first priority should be implementation of his disengagement plan.

At the London meeting between the Palestinian leadership and members of the international donor community, on 1 March 2005: 'Participants re-affirmed their commitment to achieving a resolution of this conflict through direct negotiations leading to the goal of two states—a safe and secure Israel and a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestine, living side by side in peace and security'.⁵¹ The participants also reaffirmed their commitment to the road map and to the achievement of a 'just, comprehensive and lasting settlement consistent with the Road Map and based on Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 1515'. In doing so, the participants went further than the Israeli leadership had anticipated they would: Israel had portrayed the meeting as being simply about Palestinian internal reform, including restructuring of the security services, and had justified its own decision not to attend on those grounds.

Despite this new round of international efforts, implementation of the Israeli Government's disengagement initiative looked set to hold the centre stage in the summer of 2005. This could take precedence over negotiations about

⁴⁸ US Department of State, 'A performance-based roadmap to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict', Washington, DC, 30 Apr. 2003, URL <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm>>.

⁴⁹ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Joint Press Conference: President Bush and PM Sharon', 14 Apr. 2004, URL <<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2004/Bush-Sharon+Press+Conference+14-Apr-2004.htm>>; and The White House, 'Statement by the President', 14 Apr. 2004, URL <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/>.

⁵⁰ Dwan, R. and Gustavsson, M., 'Major armed conflicts', *SIPRI Yearbook 2004* (note 36), pp. 104–106.

⁵¹ British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 'Conclusions of the London meeting on supporting the Palestinian Authority', 1 Mar. 2005, URL <www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/LondonMeeting010305_Conclusions.pdf>.

broader, long-term issues, while Israel will in any case continue to emphasize the need for a crackdown on Palestinian militant organizations as a prerequisite for implementation of the road map. Meanwhile, Palestinian refugee groups campaigning for the right of return still reject the idea of two states, on the grounds that this will only come about through sacrificing their rights. The reinvigorated peace process will therefore have to find a way to accommodate the refugees and compensate the Arab host countries if they are to be dissuaded from rejecting or sabotaging an agreement.

There has been, in effect, a fragmentation of the Palestinian people and cause, which could presage regional instability even if direct negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinians leaderships go forward.⁵² Barely half of the 8 million or so Palestinians in the region live in the West Bank and Gaza. There are about 230 000 under direct Israeli control in East Jerusalem and around 1.2 million Palestinian citizens of Israel living within the 1967 borders of the Jewish state. Up to 300 000 Palestinian refugees live in camps in Lebanon, 400 000 are registered in Syria, and over half the population of Jordan is of Palestinian origin, many of them assimilated but 1.7 million still registered as refugees awaiting a formal verdict on their status.

As Chairman of the PLO, Abbas has inherited from Arafat responsibility for the Palestinian diaspora as well as the residents of the West Bank and Gaza. By early 2005 Abbas had gained the acquiescence of militant group leaders in the West Bank and Gaza to a cessation of violence pending the resumption of negotiations with Israel. It was on the basis of this that Abbas agreed a ceasefire with Sharon at Sharm al Sheikh in February 2005. However, when this was breached, apparently by a faction of Islamic Jihad with connections in Lebanon, if not Syria, the difficulties faced by Abbas were manifest. His ability to control the factions in the West Bank and Gaza is tenuous, and his capacity to control elements in either Lebanon or Syria is even less. Abbas himself has added his voice to Israeli complaints that Hezbollah is directly assisting militants inside the occupied territories with funds and training.⁵³ Thus the regional dimensions of the Arab–Israeli conflict persist, even though Egypt and Jordan have formally made peace with Israel, and Syria would be unlikely to want a direct confrontation.

The USA has designated Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as Hezbollah, as terrorist organizations—a move which *inter alia* rules out any question of their profiting from international aid—and is demanding that Iran and Syria cease assisting all three organizations. The EU, having already designated the military wing of Hamas a terrorist organization, moved to outlaw contact with its civilian cadres as well.⁵⁴ This move could make for diplomatic difficulties

⁵² Abdullah, D., Palestinian Return Centre, 'Without the right of return the peace industry has no future in Palestine', *Return Review*, vol. 9, issue 1 (Jan. 2005), URL <<http://www.prc.org.uk/data/asp/d9/889.aspx>>.

⁵³ MacAskill, E., 'Hizbullah is involved in West Bank, says Israel', *The Guardian*, 15 Oct. 2004, p. 21.

⁵⁴ European Commission, 'Mashreq, Palestinian territories, Israel: Council conclusions on the Middle East peace process', *Bulletin of the European Union*, Bulletin EU 6-2003, URL <<http://europa.eu.int/abc/doc/off/bull/en/200306/p106082.htm>>; 'EU blacklists Hamas political wing', BBC News Online,

in dealings with the Palestinians if Hamas, having made substantial gains in municipal elections, attains a significant presence in the Palestinian Legislative Council following elections initially scheduled for July 2005 or thereafter.

Iraq and the regional fallout

During 2004 the USA had 110 000–140 000 military personnel deployed in Iraq. Iraq is the centrepiece of US military engagement in the greater Middle East and accounts for the vast majority of US military expenditure in the US CENTCOM AOR. The number of personnel deployed by other nationalities serving with the coalition in Iraq averaged 23 000. A further 26 000 US and coalition personnel were deployed in Kuwait.⁵⁵ No armed forces of Middle East states are deployed with the coalition in Iraq, although Jordan is training Iraqi army and security forces in Jordan, and the GCC countries continue to provide basing facilities for the USA. Official estimates of CENTCOM troops deployed in the CENTCOM AOR⁵⁶ in April 2004 put the total at 200 000–225 000. There were 10 US Aerospace Expeditionary Forces in the region (around 17 000 airmen).⁵⁷ The US Navy Fifth Fleet is headquartered at Manama, Bahrain, and as of July 2004 the US naval presence consisted of one carrier battle group and one amphibious group with a marine expeditionary unit for a total of around 17 000 naval personnel.⁵⁸

For Islamists and Arab nationalists outside Iraq, the resistance to the US and allied presence there is a cause célèbre.⁵⁹ For the USA struggling to restore some semblance of stability and security, its opponents are variously described as ‘anti-Iraqi forces’, subversive foreign elements, Jihadis, Saddamists, former Baathists and insurgents. Arab intellectuals will grant the presence of Jihadists—by which they mean radical Islamists, both Iraqi and foreign—but they prefer to characterize the opponents of the US and coalition forces as ‘the resistance’ rather than ‘an insurgency’, because the former sounds legitimate and the latter not. Most Iraqis who are prepared to venture an opinion for publication speak simply of fear for their personal safety and their horror at the tactics employed both by the USA and by their Iraqi and foreign opponents.

For much of 2004 US officials maintained that the insurgency was principally the work of foreign fighters and al-Qaeda elements. They accused Iran and Syria of facilitating the passage of such volunteer fighters across their borders into Iraq. Some senior figures in the US military as well as analysts in Washington offered different assessments of the resistance. They said that the

11 Sep. 2003, URL, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3100518.stm>; and Morris, H., ‘Hamas gains in Palestinian polls’, *Financial Times*, 7 May 2005.

⁵⁵ ‘US forces order of battle’, GlobalSecurity.org, URL <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat.htm>.

⁵⁶ CENTCOM AOR (note 43).

⁵⁷ ‘US forces order of battle (note 55).

⁵⁸ ‘US forces order of battle’ (note 55).

⁵⁹ For a narrative of events in the Iraq conflict during 2004 see chapter 2 in this volume. The failure to find weapons of mass destruction is discussed in chapter 13 in this volume.

conflict was developing into a classic guerrilla insurgency, financed by former Baathists, some from outside the country, and conducted by several thousand (some estimates claim 40 000) local Iraqis,⁶⁰ aided and abetted by a minority of foreign Jihadis.

Even if Iraq's neighbours have not been directly engaged in the struggle inside Iraq, all of them have stakes in the outcome. Turkey has long kept an eye on developments in Iraqi Kurdistan, fearing that Kurdish separatism there could infect the Kurds in south-eastern Anatolia, where the Turkish forces fought a long and bloody campaign against separatists under the banner of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK, *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*).⁶¹ Iran is the champion of Shia Islam in the region.⁶² The faithful make pilgrimages to the holy sites in Najaf and Kerbala in Iraq when political relations between the two countries permit. Iraq is the birthplace of Shia Islam, and Najaf and Kerbala are traditional seats of learning, only overtaken by Qom in Iran when the clerical leaders in Iraq were repressed by Saddam Hussein and Iran took on the mantle of defender of the faith.

Family ties also link Shia on either side of the Iran–Iraq border. Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani is himself of Iranian origin, while Muqtada al-Sadr has connections in Qom.⁶³ The Iraqi opposition movements, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Dawa Party, found safe haven in Iran during the regime of Saddam Hussein and have since returned to Iraq to take posts in the interim authority and then the transitional government. Their combined list won 48 per cent of the vote in the January 2005 election.

During the 1980s, when Iraq was at war with Iran, Jordan served as the main conduit for Iraqi trade (including arms supplies) with the outside world and enjoyed an economic boom as a result. During the 1990s, when Iraq was under international sanctions, Jordan continued to supply the Iraqi market and maintained formal relations with the regime. Meanwhile, however, Jordan repaired relations with the USA, damaged by Jordan's refusal to join the US-led coalition that liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in 1991. Consequently, following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Jordan provided facilities for the US military and has since taken on the task of training Iraqi security forces in Jordan. Many Iraqi nationals have taken refuge in Amman from the violence in Iraq. The UN, other agencies such as the US Agency for International Development, and NGOs operate their assistance programmes for Iraq out of Amman.

During 2004 Jordan's King Abdullah voiced the opinion that Iraq's needs would best be served by a strong leadership dedicated to restoring security there, ahead of elections. On a trip to Washington, DC, in December 2004, he warned the USA that elections could deliver an Iranian-style clerical regime in Iraq and accused Iran of infiltrating around a million people across the border

⁶⁰ Figure used by BBC reporters discussing Iraq on BBC Radio Four, 3 Jan. 2005.

⁶¹ Tisdall, S., 'Poll success fuels Turkish fear of Kurdish independence', *The Guardian*, 15 Feb. 2005, p. 13; and 'U.S. agrees to meeting with Turkey over Kurds', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 Jan. 2005, p. 3.

⁶² See also chapters 2 and 3 in this volume.

⁶³ On Muqtada al-Sadr see chapter 2 in this volume.

to inflate the Shia vote.⁶⁴ In protest, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi declined to join his counterparts from countries neighbouring Iraq at a meeting in Amman to discuss their mutual concerns, although he sent a delegation.⁶⁵ King Abdullah and his ministers meanwhile sought to galvanize Iraq's Sunni and secularist Arabs to participate in the elections to bolster this facet of Iraq's identity.⁶⁶ Such statements explain why Iran depicts the competition for power in Iraq as one between anti-Iranian Arab nationalism and a more 'inclusive' system, reflecting the country's mixed sectarian and ethnic composition.

The tribal communities across south-western Iraq have branches and relatives in both Syria and Saudi Arabia. Their tribal identities transcend their mixed sectarian affiliations, yet radical Salafis have allegedly proselytized their brand of the faith among tribesmen on either side of the Iraqi–Saudi border. There has been movement back and forth across that border of people and arms, reflected in the concurrent struggles against the authorities in both Iraq and Saudi Arabia in 2003–2004. In contrast to Saudi Arabia, where the ruling family governs in part through its alliance with the Wahhabi establishment, the Baathist regime in Syria is ideologically secular and Arab nationalist. Relations between Damascus and Baghdad were hostile during the 1980s and much of the 1990s. However, following the death of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, his son and successor, Bashar al-Assad, was able to establish links with Saddam Hussein's regime and reopen the oil pipeline from Iraq, through Syria, to the Mediterranean coast.

For a few years preceding the invasion of Iraq, Syria defied the sanctions and profited from selling more of its own oil on the market while using cheap, illicit Iraqi supplies of oil for home consumption. After the invasion, the pipeline was again closed and the Syrian economy retreated into a parlous state. Syria failed to manage the situation to advantage, alienating the USA by encouraging Iraqi resistance, before bowing to US (and British) pressure and agreeing to cooperate with the USA in policing the Syrian–Iraqi border. However, benefits have not accrued to Syria. The USA continued to complain that Syria was not doing enough and allowing Iraqi Baathists to support the insurgency from Syria. These problems are still aggravating the other sources of Syrian–US tension described in section II above, even if Lebanon has (in early 2005) become the dominant focus.

Terrorism and crises of legitimacy

Terrorism is both a long-standing feature of the enduring conflicts in the greater Middle East and a 'peacetime' phenomenon in several societies. It

⁶⁴ Wright, R. and Baker, P., 'Iraq, Jordan see threat to election from Iran: leaders warn against forming religious state', *Washington Post*, 8 Dec. 2004, p. A01, URL <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43980-2004Dec7.html>>.

⁶⁵ Smyth, G. and Bozorgmehr, N., 'Jordan clash a threat to Amman meeting', *Financial Times*, 5 Jan. 2005, p. 4.

⁶⁶ 'Minister says Jordan protecting Iraq's Arabism by opposing Iranian interference', BBC Monitoring Middle East, 2 Jan. 2005.

both reflects and aggravates problems of state weakness and legitimacy. It has been markedly 'transnational' in character in this region, long before the emergence of the Saudi-rooted but globally active al-Qaeda. Since May 2003 Saudi Arabia has witnessed a number of terrorist incidents directed at the Al Saud ruling family as well as a continuation of attacks on expatriate targets in the kingdom. The Yemeni authorities are engaged in a counter-terrorism campaign against elements associated with al-Qaeda. Egypt and Jordan continue to arrest and interrogate nationals accused of involvement in global terrorist activities directed against the USA and allied Arab governments. In 2003–2004 Turkey was the scene of bombings aimed at 'Western' interests, including the British consulate and an HSBC bank in Istanbul.

In Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the GCC, demonstrations are either banned or heavily policed, if not disbanded. Government security operations across the region are raising issues of human security. Cooperation between the regional and Western governments in tracking, apprehending and detaining terrorist suspects has raised concerns in legal professional and media circles that such measures jeopardize human rights.

The net effect of so much violence, overt and subtle, has been to fuel perceptions of a regional malaise, variously diagnosed as a crisis of regime legitimacy, 'a clash of civilizations', a new phase in anti-imperialist nationalism, religious and sectarian warfare, and a struggle over access to resources, in particular oil and oil revenues, in the context of economic and cultural globalization. Clearly, different factors or combinations of factors are at work in different parts of the region, although there are linkages and themes that transcend the situation in each of the countries concerned.

For strategists in or associated with the Bush Administration, loosely designated the neo-conservatives or 'neo-cons', the problem is twofold: (a) religiously inspired terrorism, as manifest in the September 2001 attacks on the USA; and (b) a populist reaction against oppressive regimes hitherto bolstered by successive US administrations in the name of 'realism'. The cure, according to this logic, is also twofold: to demonstrate that those using terrorism will never succeed, and to democratize corrupt regimes.

In contrast, according to opinion polls in a number of the countries in the region, many Arabs feel that the overriding problem is the neo-imperialist ambitions of the USA, aided and abetted by Israel, to control the region and its oil.⁶⁷ Such thinking is informed by popular interpretations of the historical record, including the deployment of US troops and armour, at the head of an international coalition, to reverse the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1991, and the absence of a similar or effective diplomatic effort to reverse the Israeli occupation of Palestinian (and other Arab) land.

Arab opinion is of course informed by Arabic satellite television coverage of US military actions in Iraq and Israeli tactics in the West Bank and Gaza. There are those in the USA who argue that such footage is pure propaganda

⁶⁷ See, e.g., *Revisiting the Arab Street: Research from Within* (Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan: Amman, Feb. 2005), URL <<http://www.css-jordan.org/new/REVISITINGTHEARABSTREETReport.pdf>>.

and a misrepresentation of the core issues. In any case, Osama bin Laden and others associated with al-Qaeda have highlighted the suffering of the Iraqi people and the Palestinians, over the years, as evidence of their oppression at the hands of ‘infidels’. These themes surfaced in bin Laden’s pronouncements even before September 2001, although his main focus has been on ‘collusion’ between the House of Saud and the USA and on the presence of Westerners in the holy lands of Islam.

Arab intellectuals and columnists, meanwhile, are concerned that defensible Arab causes are being hijacked by radical Islamists such as bin Laden and that the use of terrorist tactics such as suicide bombings and public executions targeting civilians have reached unprecedented levels of brutality and immorality. Such interlocutors express concern that their societies are indeed in crisis, as atrocities are tolerated and Islam is tarnished by association. Yet they rail against US policies in the region at the same time as they demand an end to corrupt and dictatorial practices by their rulers.

There is an overlap between the diagnoses of the US neo-cons and those of the Arab intellectuals. Both groups point to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Arab Human Development Reports⁶⁸ of recent years as incisive appraisals of the ills that characterize Arab societies and the remedies needed. However, where they disagree is on the role of the USA in delivering the necessary cures. A collection of public opinion polls, conducted in 2004 by a consortium of Arab institutions in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian Territories, found that respondents admire the values espoused by the USA, including democracy and human rights, but they are deeply opposed to US policies in the region, particularly in Iraq and in support of Israel.⁶⁹

Disagreement over the drafting of a UNDP Arab Human Development Report in 2004 revealed the core elements in the contending views of the region. Reportedly, the USA objected to passages in the draft which referred to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the US presence in Iraq as problems requiring remedy in the interests of reform and development in the region. Egypt apparently objected to passages critical of Egyptian government practices. The resulting furore held up publication of the 2004 report.⁷⁰

IV. Military spending

Governments across the Middle East continue to devote significant proportions of revenue to defence. SIPRI data on military expenditure indicate that regional military spending in the Middle East has increased almost continu-

⁶⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Regional Bureau for Arab States, ‘Arab Human Development Report 2003’, URL <<http://www.rbas.undp.org/ahdr2.cfm?menu=9>>; and UNDP, Regional Bureau for Arab States, ‘Arab Human Development Report 2004’, URL <<http://cfapp2.undp.org/rbas/ahdr2.cfm?menu=12>>.

⁶⁹ *Revisiting the Arab Street* (note 67).

⁷⁰ Fattah, H. M., ‘Arab report to UN asks vast reform in Mideast’, *International Herald Tribune*, 6 Apr. 2005; and Khalaf, R., ‘Reforms in Arab world “are largely cosmetic”’, *Financial Times*, 6 Apr. 2005.

Table 5.1. Armed forces in the greater Middle East, as of July 2004

Country	Population	Army	Navy	Air force	Total armed forces
Bahrain	724 000	8 500	1 200	1 500	11 200
Egypt	71 931 000	320 000	20 000	30 000	370 000
Iran	68 920 000	350 000	18 000	52 000	420 000
Iraq	25 175 000	35 000^a
Israel	6 433 000	125 000	8 000	35 000	168 000
Jordan	5 473 000	85 000	500	15 000	100 500
Kuwait	2 521 000	11 000	2 000	2 500	15 500
Lebanon	3 653 000	70 000	1 100	1 000	72 100
Oman	2 851 000	25 000	42 000	4 100	71 100
Qatar	610 000	8 500	1 800	2 100	12 400
Saudi Arabia	24 217 000	75 000	15 500	18 000	108 500
Syria	17 800 000	200 000	7 500	35 000	242 500
Turkey	71 325 000	402 000	52 750	60 100	514 850
UAE	2 995 000	44 000	2 500	4 000	50 500
Yemen	20 010 000	60 000	1 700	5 000	66 700

^a Estimated required strength; Iraqi Police Service not included.

Sources: World Health Organization (WHO), *World Health Report 2005: Make Every Mother and Child Count* (WHO: Geneva, 2004), URL <<http://www.who.int/whr/2005/en/>>; and International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2004/2005* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004).

ously throughout the period 1996–2004, reaching \$56.1 billion in 2004 (at constant 2003 prices and exchange rates).⁷¹ While the biggest spenders in the region rank nowhere near the world's biggest (USA, UK, France, Japan and China are the top five, in that order), Saudi Arabia ranks 9th, Israel 12th and Turkey 14th in terms of military expenditure.⁷² Table 5.1 presents data on the armed forces of 15 countries in the Middle East.

Although the region lacks any kind of negotiated restraint on conventional force levels, and thus arms races of all kinds are a permanent possibility and concern, world attention since 2001 has focused especially on acquisitions that could be relevant to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, notably missiles. In 2004 Iran developed new missile capabilities. In September a test launch of the Shahab-3 intermediate-range ballistic missile indicated that it could have exceeded its previous best range of 1000 km.⁷³ The test coincided with large-scale military exercises in western Iran, and was described by Iranian officials as 'an attempt to bolster deterrence against any Israeli or military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities'.⁷⁴ At the beginning of October Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Chairman of the Iranian Expediency Council,

⁷¹ See table 8A.1 in this volume.

⁷² See table 8.3 in this volume. A brief summary of military expenditure trends in the Middle East is given in chapter 8 in this volume.

⁷³ 'Iranian missile tests focus minds on GCC defence', *Gulf States Newsletter*, vol. 28, no. 742 (1 Oct. 2004), pp. 5–6.

⁷⁴ Ben-David, A., 'Iran unveils redesigned Shahab missile', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 41, no. 39 (29 Sep. 2004), p. 6.

said that Iran possessed missiles with a range of 2000 km.⁷⁵ Israeli commentators meanwhile claimed that the enhanced Shahab missile could be capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Although it did not state that Iran was in possession of such a warhead, Israel openly expressed fears that Iran's civil nuclear power programme had a secret military component.

For its part, Israel proceeded with tests of its Arrow anti-ballistic missile system in 2004. Israel's missile arsenal includes the C50 Jericho II, claimed to have a range of at least 1500 km.⁷⁶ Analysts believe this missile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, at least 200 of which Israel is thought to possess, although Israeli government policy is neither to confirm nor deny whether this is the case.⁷⁷ Israel was also actively developing its cruise missile capabilities in 2004. In June it was reported that Israel had developed a ground-launched version of its Delilah air-launched cruise missile, reportedly with a range of over 300 km.⁷⁸ The Delilah missile is not known to have a nuclear capability. There were also unconfirmed media reports that Israel had developed a sea-based nuclear deterrent in the form of nuclear-armed modified Harpoon anti-ship missiles deployed on its German-built Dolphin class submarines.⁷⁹

Iranian announcements on its missile programmes also indicated plans to develop a maritime cruise missile called Ra'ad, which is not known to have a nuclear capability.⁸⁰ There is speculation, however, that some Iranian claims may be for propaganda (or deterrent) purposes, rather than accurate accounts of Iranian capabilities. Even so, the EU, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Israel and the USA harbour varying levels of suspicion about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, which can only be reinforced by the evidence of its missile development programmes and by the rhetoric surrounding these. The story of European and US efforts to clarify and resolve the Iranian nuclear issue is told elsewhere in this yearbook.⁸¹

That Iran is increasing its general military advantage in relation to the GCC states seems beyond doubt.⁸² The impetus for the GCC states is there to improve their air defence capabilities, although in 2004 they made no major new acquisitions in this respect, concentrating on the integration of equipment delivered under earlier contracts and on consolidation of their existing capabil-

⁷⁵ 'Iran "increases missile range"', BBC News Online, 5 Oct. 2004, URL <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3716490.stm>.

⁷⁶ 'Jericho 2', GlobalSecurity.org, URL <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/israel/jericho-2.htm>>. On Israeli nuclear forces see appendix 12A in this volume.

⁷⁷ Vause, J., 'Israel's "bomb in the basement"', CNN.com, 21 Apr. 2004, URL <<http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/04/21/israel.vanunu.vause/>>.

⁷⁸ Ben-David, A., 'Israel develops ground-launched Delilah missile', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 41, no. 24 (16 June 2004), p. 10.

⁷⁹ 'Israel to acquire 2 more German submarines', *Maariv International* (Internet edn), 22 Dec. 2004, URL <<http://www.maarivintl.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=article&articleID=12098>>.

⁸⁰ Hewson, R., 'Iran ready to field maritime cruise missiles', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 41, no. 8 (25 Feb. 2004), p. 13.

⁸¹ See chapter 12 in this volume.

⁸² Blanche, E., 'Winds of change: the Gulf Co-operation Council states are adjusting to major shifts in the security environment', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 42, no. 6 (9 Feb. 2005), pp. 28–37.

ities. There was also little progress made on developing a joint defence capability or making GCC forces interoperable, although some of their systems are interoperable with those of the USA. The GCC states are not considered to have capabilities or ambitions to acquire chemical or biological weapons, although other US allies in the region, notably Israel but also Egypt, are thought to have experimental programmes as part of their defence arrangements.

Syria has long been suspected of seeking some level of chemical weapon capability, but it did initial an Association Agreement with the EU in late 2004 that included a clause renouncing WMD.⁸³ In January 2005 the USA indicated strong opposition to the possibility of Russia's supplying an updated version of the Scud missile to Syria, reportedly capable of 'pinpoint strikes against targets within a 300-km range, which would include all Israeli territory'.⁸⁴

V. Regionalism and cooperation

Various multilateral organizations based elsewhere have become involved in the greater Middle East, including the EU, NATO, the Group of Eight (G8) industrialized nations, the Quartet focusing on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the UN and related bodies, notably the IAEA. NATO and the EU in particular have recently developed new initiatives and extended partnerships which, along with active US diplomacy and interventions, could have a transformative effect. While less robust than the initiatives instigated at the international level, within the region the Arab League has pledged to promote political reform in conjunction with the pursuit of Middle East peace. At the sub-regional level, the GCC continues to espouse both economic and security cooperation among its member states, and the February 2004 Agadir Agreement, signed by Jordan, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, is designed to create a free trade area between the signatories.⁸⁵

NATO

NATO involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq has increased. At their summit meeting in Brussels on 22 February 2005, NATO heads of state and government announced the expansion of the ISAF operation to the western part of Afghanistan and their intention to provide additional forces for the anticipated National Assembly elections. On Iraq, they issued the following statement:

⁸³ European Commission, 'EU and Syria mark end of negotiations for an Association Agreement', Brussels, 19 Oct. 2004, URL <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/syria/intro/ip04_1246.htm>. On the status of the agreement see European Commission, 'Association agreements', URL <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/med_ass_agreemnts.htm>.

⁸⁴ Gollust, D., 'US Opposes Russian missile sale to Syria', Voice of America, 12 Jan. 2005, URL <<http://www.voanews.com/english/2005-01-12-voa52.cfm>>.

⁸⁵ European Commission, 'Commissioner Patten attends signature of Agadir Agreement', Brussels, 24 Feb. 2004, URL <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/news/ip04_256.htm>.

The Iraqi people have shown enormous courage in shaping their own future at the election booth. Reaffirming Iraq's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, we are united in our commitment to support them and their newly-elected government in their effort to build an inclusive democracy and secure nation. Consistent with UNSC Resolution 1546, all 26 Allies are contributing to the NATO mission to assist in training Iraqi security forces, to hasten the day when they can take full responsibility for the stability of the country and the security of its citizens.⁸⁶

During the visit of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to NATO headquarters, and at a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Nice, in early 2005 the possibility of a role for NATO forces in implementation of a future Israeli–Palestinian peace agreement was raised. No decision was taken to prepare for such a role, but the idea was considered serious.⁸⁷

At their summit meeting in Istanbul in July 2004, NATO members agreed to enhance their Mediterranean Dialogue Initiative (originally launched in 1994) and launch a new Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).⁸⁸ The two initiatives are distinct but complementary. Initiated with a view to building confidence through dialogue and practical cooperation with the southern Mediterranean states, the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue has been progressively adapted in keeping with NATO's own changing priorities. It is intended to deepen bilateral relations with each of the partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and to increase multilateral cooperation between them and NATO on airspace management, border security, counter-terrorism, defence reform, civil emergency planning, military exercises, and training and education.

Thus far, the North African partner countries have shown most interest in cooperation on border security and fighting the war on terrorism; and even though historically this was not at the forefront of NATO's own agenda, the organization is identifying ways in which it can contribute to the task. Israel is interested in the possibilities of a more extensive relationship with NATO and is even debating whether it should seek membership.⁸⁹

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative emerged from discussions within NATO about expanded involvement in the Middle East, with the UK and the USA apparently looking for a single overarching approach incorporating the Mediterranean Dialogue and others cautioning against diluting the latter process. The ICI was designed to reach out to Middle Eastern countries, not only in the Mediterranean but also beyond, starting with the member states of the GCC.

⁸⁶ NATO, 'Statement issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels', 22 Feb. 2005, URL <www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p05-022e.htm>. For list of individual contributions see 'NATO nations to offer assistance in training Iraqi military', *Kansas City Star*, 21 Feb. 2005, p. A15.

⁸⁷ 'NATO role eyed in M-E peace deal', *The Australian*, URL <<http://www.theAustralian.news.com.au>>, 3 Feb. 2005; and Bitterlemon-international.org, Middle East Roundtable, 'NATO and the Middle East', edn 6, vol. 3 (17 Feb. 2005), URL <<http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?opt=1&id=72>>.

⁸⁸ See also chapter 1 in this volume.

⁸⁹ Dempsey, J., 'Israel explores closer link to NATO, even membership', *International Herald Tribune*, 3 Mar. 2005, p. 3.

Each partner country is invited to choose the substance of bilateral dialogue and cooperation from a range of options available to them, including: (a) enhancing political dialogue, at ministerial/Secretary General level; (b) achieving interoperability, a long-term process about procedures and communications in the field; (c) fighting terrorism; and (d) defence reform, wherein NATO provides advice on best practice for upgrading armed forces capability and budgeting.⁹⁰

In December 2004 Kuwait became the first GCC country to be officially accepted into the ICI. The way ahead will be through practical cooperation, using the tools developed in the context of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP),⁹¹ and building complementarity. The focus is on preventing funds from reaching terrorist groups, building counter-insurgency capacities and combating illegal arms trafficking.⁹²

Conceivably, this focus could create an unbalanced relationship. WMD and terrorism affect South–South relations and potentially threaten the NATO members, but the latter do not pose the same danger to the Southern states. NATO itself has an image problem in so far as it is perceived as a vehicle for Western 'imperialist' or US national security agendas in the region. Moreover, while NATO can provide confidence-building measures in North–South relations, it must work in conjunction with the EU, the G8 and the USA to tackle more comprehensively the economic, social and political problems that underlie the inequitable distribution of public goods and hence instability and, ultimately, terrorism.⁹³ Cooperation between NATO and PFP countries on combating terrorism may, moreover, because of its impact on internal security governance, cut across or even contradict the political and economic reform initiatives of the EU, the G8 and the USA.

Arab security cooperation

Plans for a joint defence capability for the GCC date back to 1983, two years after the organization was formed. At the time Iran was deemed the primary threat, but after the end of the Iraq–Iran war in 1988 there were also concerns about Iraq. In any case, in 1984 the GCC member states constituted a joint force called 'Peninsula Shield', based at Hafr al Batin military city in northern Saudi Arabia. In November 2004 the GCC drafted a plan to increase the combined force level to 12 000 by 2010, fully equipped and trained with the most advanced weapons.⁹⁴

From the early 1990s a three-tier defence arrangement for the GCC states has been envisaged, Tier I being the local hosting of US forces, Tier II a joint

⁹⁰ NATO 'Istanbul Cooperation Initiative', Policy document, 9 July 2004, URL <www.nato.int/docu/comm/2004/06-istanbul/docu-cooperation.htm>.

⁹¹ For the members of the NATO PFP see the glossary in this volume.

⁹² Independent Media Review Analysis, 'NATO recommends ties with Gulf Arab states', 17 Feb. 2005, URL <<http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=24171>>.

⁹³ For more on international security and 'global public goods' see chapter 7 in this volume.

⁹⁴ Dow Jones and Reuters, 'Persian Gulf—GCC plans restrained military growth', Daily Defense News Capsules, 2 Nov. 2004, URL <<http://www.factiva.com>>.

GCC capability and Tier III the self-defence capabilities of individual states. The USA has encouraged the development of Tiers I and III but has allowed Tier II to await agreement within the GCC.⁹⁵ This has been impeded by separate acquisitions policies, internal rivalries and tensions, lack of agreement on the nature of the threats faced and reliance on the USA for protection. There has been some progress on the integration of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C⁴ISR).⁹⁶ The achievement of a more effective integration of defence remains impeded, however, by conflicting priorities and interests.

In March 2005 the member states of the Arab League adopted the Algiers Declaration, pledging closer cooperation on a range of issues, including renewing: ‘our attachment to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East as a strategic choice to settle the Arab–Israeli conflict, highlighting in this respect the Arab peace initiative adopted by the Arab summit in Beirut in the year 2002, the resolutions of the international legality, the Madrid conference which is based on the principle of land for peace’.⁹⁷ The Declaration goes on to enumerate the Arab League’s position on a number of issues, including statehood for the Palestinians, resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948,⁹⁸ resolution of the Syrian–Israeli dispute over the Golan and Shebaa Farms by return to the 4 June line,⁹⁹ and support for the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty and for the efforts of the Sudanese Government to deal with the conflict in Darfur, Sudan.

The members of the Arab League did not tackle the question of WMD in the region, although they have previously discussed a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region. The Algiers Declaration was perhaps most important for its restatement of Arab solidarity and the commitment of Arab governments to the principle of reform. In this respect the initiative was a response to US and other international pressure—although Arab proponents of reform continue to complain that there is more talk than action on this.¹⁰⁰

Political reform, democracy and security

In June 2004 a series of initiatives were launched to promote human rights, democracy, civil society dialogue and economic reform in the name of regional security and counter-terrorism. The USA unveiled its Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative, which had been in development since President Bush announced his intention to promote reform in the region

⁹⁵ ‘More than 20 years of talk, but limited progress toward GCC defence integration’, *Gulf States News Letter*, vol. 28, no. 748 (22 Dec. 2004).

⁹⁶ ‘More than 20 years of talk, but limited progress toward GCC defence integration’ (note 95).

⁹⁷ Algerian Television, ‘Arab League summit adopts “Algiers Declaration”’, BBC Monitoring, 23 Mar. 2005.

⁹⁸ ‘Palestine—progress report of the United Nations mediator’, UN General Assembly Resolution 194, 11 Dec. 1948, URL <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/3/ares3.htm>>.

⁹⁹ The 4 June line refers to the line of confrontation between Israel and Syria the day before the start of the June 1967 war.

¹⁰⁰ Khalaf, R., ‘Reforms in Arab world “are largely cosmetic”’, *Financial Times*, 6 Apr. 2005.

in late 2003, with an aid package of around \$70 million.¹⁰¹ At the 2004 G8 summit meeting in Sea Island, Georgia,¹⁰² this powerful economic grouping finalized and adopted the Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa.¹⁰³ Shortly thereafter the EU launched its Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East.¹⁰⁴

The aims of the EU and the US/G8 initiative are broadly similar, but to be pursued in parallel rather than jointly. The US/G8 initiative pledged action in three areas: the political, the social and cultural, and the economic spheres. The objectives included state reform, good governance and modernization as ingredients of democracy; education, freedom of expression and gender equality with an emphasis on reducing illiteracy among girls and women; and job creation in the private sector, expanding trade and investment, securing property rights and the promotion of intra-regional trade. The principal vehicle for carrying forward these goals is the Forum for the Future, bringing together the G8 members and 30 partner nations of the BMENA region. The forum met for the first time in Rabat, Morocco, in December 2004. The focus was on consultation between the foreign and economic ministers from the states involved, who reviewed progress on reform to date and discussed ways to take forward some specific initiatives.¹⁰⁵

The EU's Strategic Partnership is an umbrella concept designed to give direction and coherence to Europe's relations with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The initiative encompasses the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), launched in 1995 with the Barcelona Declaration¹⁰⁶ and recently enhanced with the EU European Neighbourhood Policy,¹⁰⁷ as well as the EU–GCC Dialogue and bilateral relations with Iran, Iraq and Yemen. As most recently formulated in the EU's European Security Strategy of December 2003, the aim of the Strategic Partnership is the promotion of 'a ring of well governed countries . . . on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ US Department of State, 'Fact Sheet: Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative', 6 Nov. 2003, URL <<http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/fs/33380.htm>>.

¹⁰² See also chapter 17 in this volume.

¹⁰³ 'Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa, 9 June 2004, URL <http://www.g8usa.gov/d_060904c.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ 'EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East' (note 2); and the EU's Mediterranean and Middle East Policy Internet site (note 2).

¹⁰⁵ US Department of State, 'Forum for the Future', URL <www.state.gov/e/eb/ecosum/future/index.htm>.

¹⁰⁶ The Nov. 1995 Barcelona Declaration is reproduced on the Internet site of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at URL <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/bd.htm>.

¹⁰⁷ 'Communication from the Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper', European Commission document no. COM(2004) 373 final, Brussels, 12 May 2004, available at URL <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/document_en.htm>. See also chapter 1 in this volume.

¹⁰⁸ Council of the European Union, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy', Brussels, 12 Dec. 2003, URL <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_data/docs/2004/4/29/European%20Security%20Strategy.pdf>; and 'EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East: Final Report', *Euromed Report*, issue no. 78 (23 June 2004).

Partnership and dialogue are identified as the cornerstones of the strategy, building specifically on the declaration of the Arab League at its summit meeting in Tunis in May 2004, which referred to working with the international community in the interests of prosperity and development of the Arab states and peoples. The primary EU concerns are good governance, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender, respect for the rights of minorities, cooperation on non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, conflict prevention and resolution, and economic development.¹⁰⁹ Among the intended responses are: promotion of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, addressing migration issues, ensuring security of energy supplies, and promoting sustainable development.

The EU has designated 2005 as the 'Year of the Mediterranean' and in this, the 10th anniversary year of the launch of the EMP, the intention is to reinvigorate that Partnership, which aims above all to create a Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area by 2010. While progress has been made on the economic agenda, and partnership agreements have been concluded with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria (put on hold after the assassination of Hariri) and Tunisia, hopes that the process would promote human rights, political reform and security cooperation have not been realized. As of 2004, however, the EU has insisted that all partnership and trade and cooperation agreements with the EU include a clause pledging the signatories to the renunciation of WMD.

Overall, the EU approach to political and economic reform in the Mediterranean and the Middle East makes maximum use of the instruments of 'soft power'. The EU provides billions of dollars as aid to the EMP countries alone, dwarfing US pledges under its BMENA Initiative. However, US preparedness to use 'hard power', demonstrated in Iraq, clearly has a galvanizing effect on attitudes in the region. In his Inaugural and State of the Union addresses in early 2005, President Bush expressed renewed determination to push democratization in the region and confront 'tyranny'.¹¹⁰ Although France co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 1559,¹¹¹ demanding that Syria withdraw its troops from Lebanon and the EU echoed that call, it was US demands to this effect that generated the most fear of the consequences if Syria failed to act.

VI. Conclusions

The state system in the greater Middle East is both fragile and unfinished. The vision of a Palestinian state alongside Israel has been endorsed by the UN, the

¹⁰⁹ 'EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East' (note 108).

¹¹⁰ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'President sworn-in to second term', Washington, DC, 20 Jan. 2005, URL <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html>>; The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'President holds press conference', Washington, DC, 26 Jan. 2005, URL <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050126-3.html>>; and The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'President discusses war on terror', National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, 8 Mar. 2005, URL <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/03/20050308-3.html>>.

¹¹¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1559 (note 30).

USA, the EU, other members of the international community, the Arab League and the protagonists themselves. What shape it will take will depend on the willingness and ability of the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to compromise and the continuing commitment of international players to assisting them.

Iraq is being reborn as a state and whether it will hold together is not certain. In any case, the old elite has been replaced by a new one, including Shia party leaders and Kurdish nationalists. This transformation may please Iran but is not greeted with enthusiasm among Iraq's other neighbours, all dominated by secular or Sunni elites and in the case of Saudi Arabia a traditionally anti-Shia religious establishment alongside the monarchy. Even if the governments in Iraq's neighbouring states do not cooperate with the insurgency, some ideologues and opportunists among their populations will. In the midst of this maelstrom it is unclear whether the USA is bogged down or destined to prevail.

The state system is not so fragile that it is about to unravel completely. Instead, the region looks set for another round in the zero-sum competition that characterized it for much of the 20th century. The travails of some players translate into the gains of others, not least in the competition for a share of the oil market. Energy resources and military alliances with the USA provide the smaller GCC states with a significance and independence that they might otherwise have lost to more powerful regional players. Yet, by hosting the US military, they open themselves, as Saudi Arabia has done, to accusations of collusion with infidels by al-Qaeda elements and imitators. Failure to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians will keep anti-US sentiments alive among Arabs who may not wish to take up arms but who will give a sympathetic hearing to Islamists and Arab nationalists working against the current regional order.

In this context the possibility that Iran will develop a nuclear weapon capability could spell the collapse of the international strategy to contain proliferation. Pre-emptive action by the USA might avert that spectre but would trigger a backlash of hostility not only in Iran but also across the region. However, the European states are working to find a diplomatic alternative and the importance of the issue could generate more transatlantic cooperation. Realization of the benefits of a collective regional approach to security may yet combine with fear of the alternatives to temper the pursuit of short-term and ultimately self-defeating strategies and conflicting interests.