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JSOU Report 15-3 Saudi Arabia: Modernity, Stability, and the Twenty-First Century Monarchy Barrett

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Saudi Arabia: Modernity, Stability, and the Twenty-First Century Monarchy

Roby C. Barrett
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Top right: The Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Photo used by permission of Shutterstock.

Bottom left: Kingdom tower, a business/convention center and shopping mall, is one of the main landmarks of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Photo used by permission of Shutterstock.

Bottom right: A woman in traditional dress. Photo used by permission of Shutterstock.

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Contents

Foreword ix

About the Author xi

Introduction 1

1. The Arabian Context and Emergence of the Saudi State 7

2. Ibn Saud and the Founding of Saudi Arabia 27

3. Transition and Crisis: 1953-1975 43

4. Modern Saudi Arabia and the Patronage State 63

5. The Reign of King Abdullah and the Contemporary Reality 81

6. Conclusion 95

7. Epilogue 103

Endnotes 107

Foreword

Dr. Roby Barrett's *Saudi Arabia: Modernity, Stability and the Twenty-First Century Monarchy* will be of interest to any reader seeking a better understanding of the political and cultural history in Saudi Arabia. There is a current need for Special Operations Forces, specifically to appreciate the historical, domestic, regional, and other influences on the worldview and decision-making of Saudi Arabia's leaders, particularly those issues that have a significant impact on U.S.–Saudi security relationships. His monograph is a fascinating, condensed history of Saudi Arabia, focused on events and decisions that influence the modern political worldview of citizens in that country. For example, a history of tribes being ruled by outsiders; the pros and cons of alliances with the British and (more recently) the U.S., the impact of global geopolitics (e.g. Cold War), and the impact of regional neighbors' policies and events on Saudi Arabia's domestic and foreign policies (to include its relationship with the U.S.). This volume explains the importance of politically shrewd and pragmatic leaders and the ways that Iran's ambitions and policies threaten Saudi Arabia's regional influence, as well as how the historical fracturing of the U.S.-Iran relationship played well for Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Barrett also provides a brief overview of Arabia from the early Islamic period to the rise of the first Saudi state in 1744 and then examines the emergence of Wahhabi Islam and First (1744-1818) and Second (1824-1891) Saudi States and the challenges associated with them. He then analyzes the emergence of the Third Saudi State and Saudi Arabia, and the recognition by Ibn Saud of the weaknesses and problems that undermined the previous Saudi States. This leads to the great succession crisis of the 1950s and 1960s when revolutionary Egypt and instability across the region toppled monarchies and threatened traditional regimes. Dr. Barrett highlights contemporary Saudi Arabia from 1975 to 2005 (the year that King Abdullah assumed the throne) and analyzes the reign of King Abdullah and his attempts to rationalize and reform the political, economic, and social life of the nation. Finally, Dr. Barrett looks to the future and assesses the likely continuum with the context of Saudi political, economic, and social development.

This monograph has value to the military and policy world. It is not only a good explanation of the history of Saudi Arabia, but its greatest value is its succinctness in analyzing and presenting the Saudi strategic culture. It should be of interest to strategists, planners, and leaders interested in the region and the relationship with the Kingdom. The monograph concludes with an epilogue addressing King Abdullah's death on 23 January 2015 at age 90, providing context to the transition to King Salman's government and what the line of succession will look like in the future.

Kenneth H. Poole, Ed.D.
Director, Center for Special Operations Studies and Research

About the Author

Dr. Roby C. Barrett is a senior fellow with the JSOU Strategic Studies Department. He has over 35 years of government, business, and academic experience in the Middle East and Africa. Dr. Barrett is the president of a consulting firm, specializing in technology applications and systems for national defense and security. He has extensive experience in space systems, nuclear issues, police and security systems, command and control, technology development, and weapons acquisition as they relate to both U.S. and allied governments. The current focus of his research is strategic security issues in the Persian/Arabian Gulf, including Islam, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, and the collapse of state structure in the Levant. He is a former Foreign Service officer in the Middle East with a strong background in the cultural and political dynamics of historical Islamic and political development. His posting and other assignments included Tunisia, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Arabian Gulf.

As a founder of the National History Center within the American Historical Association, Dr. Barrett specializes in the application of broad historical and conceptual paradigms to issues of ongoing political and military conflict and the projection of future trends. He is an area expert and fellow at the Middle East Institute (MEI) in Washington, D.C. He provides domestic and international media commentary on a range of issues from the Palestinian territories to nuclear proliferation and the challenges of Russian policy in the Middle East and North Africa. Initially trained as a Soviet and Russian specialist, Dr. Barrett brings unique insights to the regenerated competition between Russia, China, and the United States in the Middle East and Africa.

He also serves as the senior advisor to the Board of Directors of the Bilateral Arab-U.S. Chamber of Commerce, an organization whose members include major foreign and domestic petroleum companies. He is the lead panelist on Middle East and South Asian Policy. He also participates in the Congressional Fellowship Program, American Political Science Association, and Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies in Washington,

D.C. He has been a featured panelist for the German Council on Foreign Relations on Middle East and Gulf Affairs. Dr. Barrett also serves as a lecturer on Gulf affairs, Iraq, and U.S. foreign policy for the Air Force Special Operations Command and in response to special requirements.

Dr. Barrett was an Eisenhower-Roberts fellow of the Eisenhower Institute in Washington D.C., a Rotary International fellow at the Russian and East European Institute at the University of Munich, and a Scottish Rite Research fellow at Oxford University. He holds a B.A. in History and Political Science from East Texas State University and an M.A. in Political Science and Russian History from Baylor University. He is a graduate of the Foreign Service Institute's intensive 2-year Arab Language and Middle East Area Studies program and the Counterterrorism Tactics course and took part in the Special Operations course. He has a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern and South Asian History from the University of Texas (UT)–Austin. Other honors include the Guittard Fellowship (Baylor), the Dora Bonham Graduate Research Grant (UT-Austin), the David Bruton Graduate Fellowship (UT-Austin), the Russian Language Scholarship (Munich), and the Falcon Award from the U.S. Air Force Academy.

As an author, Dr. Barrett's works range from books to articles on the Arab League and digital research techniques: *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: U.S. Foreign Policy under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); "Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959" in *MEI Policy Briefs*, 2008; *The Arabian Gulf and Security Policy: The Past as Present, the Present as Future* (JSOU Press, 2009); "The Aftermath of the 1958 Revolution in Iraq" in *Ultimate Adventures with Britannia* (I. B. Tauris, 2009); "Gulf Security: Policies without Context" in *MEI Bulletin*, 2010; *Yemen: A Different Political Paradigm in Context* (JSOU Press, 2011); *Oman: The Present in the Context of a Fractured Past* (JSOU Press, 2011); *Iran: Illusion, Reality and Interests* (JSOU Press, 2012); and *Islam: Ideology and Conflict* (JSOU Press, 2014).

Dr. Barrett was a guest speaker at the Bahrain MOI Gulf Security Forum (2008), the SOF Conference at the opening of the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center (Amman 2009), and the Bahrain SOF Conference (2010). Through deployment briefings and other forums, Dr. Barrett supported numerous military units; five examples are the 5th Special Forces Group and 101st Airborne, both in the U.S. and Iraq; Naval Special Warfare Command, both in the U.S. and the Arabian Gulf; 4th Psychological Warfare Group; and 19th Special Forces Group. He was a visiting professor at the Royal Saudi

Arabian Command and Staff School (2010-2012). He also provides support to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of State, and the intelligence community.

His commentary has also appeared in the U.S., Latin American, European, and Middle East Press—for example, CCTV-America, Fox, CBS, ABC, National Public Radio, Voice of America English and Pakistan Services, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service, Canadian National Broadcasting System, BBC Arabic Service, *Gulf News*, and *The National Abu Dhabi*.

Figure 1. Modern day map of Saudi Arabia. Source: U.S. Special Operations Command Graphics.

Introduction

For the West, the stability and security of Saudi Arabia are important factors in the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia has been the key to global economic stability and stood in staunch opposition to Communism, radical Arab nationalism, radical Khomeini Shi'ism, the extremism of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The importance of Saudi Arabia is central to understanding U.S. global and Middle Eastern policy. Saudi political, economic, and cultural development is critical to providing a baseline for projecting future political and security requirements. Central to this narrative is the Saudi perspective on its role in the region. With a population of only 22 million, the Kingdom's natural resources make it an energy superpower. Its ambitions and challenges set it apart from the smaller Arabian Gulf States with a different and more complex view of Gulf security. Saudi Arabia has the challenge of balancing requirements and sensitivities of the other Gulf Arab rulers while defining its leadership role with regard to Arab security and defense cooperation.

Understanding the political and security context in which Saudi Arabia has functioned over the past two and a half centuries is central to the issue of contemporary Gulf security. This awareness is critical not only to policymakers, strategists, and planners, but also to U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Saudi Arabia, the Arabian Gulf, and the broader Middle East as well. United States SOF has been conducting increased security cooperation with the Royal Saudi Arabian Armed Forces and Saudi SOF. This cooperation reflects the contemporary security challenges that face the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as the 80-year relationship based on shared key strategic interests. These key strategic interests have overshadowed other less important interests and issues that have at times made the relationship between Washington and Riyadh difficult.

Given the importance of this strategic relationship, this monograph assesses the Kingdom's strategic interests from the perspective of its own historical political, economic and social context with respect to SOF's current and future efforts in an increasingly fragmented and unstable region. It looks beyond simplistic pronouncements that so often color evaluations of the Kingdom and examines Saudi policy in terms of Saudi interests and

culture, not western-centric preconceptions and what that means for U.S. interests and strategy in the region. Saudi Arabia and the United States have legitimate policy differences and critical shared strategic interests, making an understanding of the development of the Kingdom and its current role in the global order a fundamental building block for a SOF knowledge base.

The U.S.–Saudi Arabia relationship is, for the most part, based on policy realism. The strength of the relationship is founded in the real world of hard, demonstrable interests. Both share the desire to protect their preeminent places in the global economy; at a fundamental level, they share conservative reservations about rapid political and social change and have opposed the various "–isms" of the twentieth century and the violent radicalism of the twenty-first. Both have experienced the setbacks associated with policies gone awry and yet they return to a baseline opposition to political and cultural radicalism that threaten to undermine the status quo. They not only share fundamental strategic goals, but they also share many of the same enemies—interests override esoteric social and cultural differences.

This study analyzes Saudi Arabia from the context of its own unique historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural path to a modern patronage state. It also looks toward the coming transformations facing the Kingdom—a generational leadership change, the socio-economic complications of population growth, and the challenges to Gulf security posed by an increasingly unstable region. Saudi Arabia differs fundamentally from the Gulf emirates of Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, the Sultanate of Oman, and the Kingdom of Bahrain. Saudi Arabia is the product of a parallel but very different historical experience. This is the story of three Saudi states, each driven by aggressive expansive policies, a distinct ideology, and each checked in its regional ambitions by the intervention of an outside power whose interests the Saudi state threatened.[1]

In discussing Saudi Arabia, media analysis tends to focus politically on the issue of monarchy in the twenty-first century, the economic implications of Saudi oil production and reserves, and on the external social attributes of Wahhabi Islam.[2] The monograph uses the term 'Wahhabi Islam' as a literary compromise between the commonly used but fundamentally inaccurate term, 'Wahhabism," and the far more accurate but unwieldy explanation that the predominant form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia is derived from the Hanbali *madhhab*, or school of Islamic law, as interpreted by the reform movement of Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab.

With regard to oil, while it is true that two of the five most important oil fields in the world are in Saudi Arabia, attempting to explain or understand Saudi Arabia in terms of oil is shallow and lacks perspective.[3] Oil is merely a tool. Saudi Arabia represents the marriage between dynastic political ambition and an ideology based on Wahhabi Islam. When viewed from this perspective, the structure of the Saudi state is more familiar and far more transparent. This study is not about theology; it is about politics and religion as an ideological component of power. It is about the unique circumstances surrounding the emergence of the Saudi state, a state that would survive multiple catastrophes and emerge as a powerful force in the global economy of the twenty-first century.

This monograph is comprised of six chapters. Chapter one, The Arabian Context and Emergence of the Saudi State, provides a brief overview of Arabia from the early Islamic period to the rise of the first Saudi state in 1744 and then examines the emergence of Wahhabi Islam and First (1744-1818) and Second (1824-1891) Saudi states and the challenges associated with them. This discussion serves a necessary precursor to the discussion of the Third Saudi state (1902-1932) and the founding of Saudi Arabia (1932 to the present) by Abd-al-Aziz ibn Abd-al-Rahman al-Saud (1876-1953)—also known as Ibn Saud. The chapter includes a discussion of the milieu from which Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab's reformist Islamic movement emerged and places that movement within the broader context of Islamic sects. It also surveys the impact of the first two Saudi states on the regional balance of power and the conflicts that even today affect relations in the region. The chapter examines state formation issues and the weaknesses of the two states. It was the experiences of the first two Saudi states that profoundly influenced Ibn Saud and his approach to politics, order, and foreign policy during the formative years of the third Saudi state.

Chapter two, Ibn Saud and the Founding of Saudi Arabia, analyzes the emergence of the third Saudi state and Saudi Arabia, and the recognition by Ibn Saud of the weaknesses and problems that undermined both of its predecessors. This chapter examines the foundation of the third state and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Ibn Saud's ability to play off potentially more powerful forces in the region to perpetuate the state. It explores Ibn Saud's success in avoiding those pitfalls and institutionalizing family rule while examining the monarch's search for a powerful ally. It explains these issues in terms of the overriding and abiding concern for internal stability

and control, and the balancing of family and societal interests that continues to permeate the Saudi state today. The discussion raises the concept of the patronage state and highlights the problem that most westerners have in delineating the difference between patronage and corruption.

The third chapter, Transition and Crisis 1953-1975, explores the great succession crisis of the 1950s and 1960s. That experience continues as a very real part of the political context in Saudi Arabia today. This period is when revolutionary Egypt and instability across the region toppled monarchies and threatened traditional regimes. It represents a turning point in Saudi political development, a vortex of threats and conflict from which Saudi Arabia emerged as a "national patronage state." This chapter will include a discussion of Saudi Arabia and survival in the face of determined Pan-Arab secularism and threats posed by Nasserist Egypt (the UAR) and Iraq. It will also examine the challenge posed by Pahlavi Iran (1953-1979) and the increasing cooperation between Washington and Riyadh driven by converging interests through the death of King Feisal in 1975.

The fourth chapter, Modern Saudi Arabia and the Patronage State, centers on a discussion of contemporary Saudi Arabia from 1975 to 2005. It begins with the post-Feisal era in 1975 and discusses how Saudi and U.S. policy converged to in part destabilize the increasingly megalomaniacal Shah in Iran. This chapter analyzes the regional crisis of 1979 within the context of post-1979 global realities. It also includes a discussion of the shock of austerity when oil prices collapsed in the 1980s. This section contains discussions of Saudi policy relative to Iran, Afghanistan, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Saddamist Iraq, Islamic radicalism, Yemen, Al-Qaeda, and other regional issues. It is a narrative of the difficulties of the patronage state in dealing with the political, economic, and social challenges of a more complex, large state and the domestic and regional implications.

The fifth chapter, King Abdullah and the Contemporary Reality, analyzes the last nine years, the reign of King Abdullah and his attempts to rationalize and reform the political, economic, and social life of the nation. Part of the discussion focuses on the next great political transition to the rule of the grandsons of Ibn Saud and the implications for stability and security. It examines a number of critical issues including the patronage state and political implications of its transition into the twenty-first century. It also examines the propensity of the West, and particularly the western media, to exaggerate social and economic stresses in Saudi society.

The last chapter, the Conclusion, looks to the future and assesses the likely continuum with the context of Saudi political, economic, and social development. This chapter highlights the continuing importance strategic defense in Saudi internal and external policy and the U.S.–Saudi relationship—a relationship critical to both nations' ability to protect their strategic interests. In the future, containing the regional strategic threats posed by Iran, its hegemonic interests in the Gulf and combating radical Islam and terrorism will require a nuanced approach that U.S. SOF needs to understand in order to provide any assistance that Saudi SOF might need in addressing it.

1. The Arabian Context and Emergence of the Saudi State

Following the death of the Prophet in 632 C.E., Arabia existed to a significant degree on the political, economic, and social periphery of the mainstream of Islamic political and social development. In the late seventh century, political and military power along with the center of gravity of the Islamic community, or *umma*, shifted away from Arabia. Located in the Hejaz (western coastal region of modern Saudi Arabia), even the two holy sites of Mecca and Medina were more closely linked with Egypt and Damascus and the Indian Ocean trading routes through the Red Sea and Yemen than with the rest of Arabia. During the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) the geographic birthplace of Islam, the Hejaz, became a political backwater—a place of religious pilgrimage but not a center of significant political, or for that matter, social influence. While the first two Saudi states can be viewed as examples of periodic nomadic explosions crushed by Egyptian and Ottoman military, it was the political acumen of Ibn Saud, who navigated the labyrinth of Arabian tribal politics, the shifting alliances of World War I, and finally in 1938 the discovery of oil at Dammam No. 7, that led to the modern state. It was the special religious or ideological mantel claimed by the Saudi state in the eighteenth century that laid the foundation for the contemporary struggle for influence in the Gulf with Iran and its claim to its own unique ideological religious approach to politics.

Understanding this chain of events sheds light on the exceptionalist view that Saudi Arabia has of itself and on the alliance of the al-Saud family and conservative Islam as manifested through the Wahhabi reform movement of the Hanbali madhhab (school of Islamic law). The rise from an area ruled in disjointed fashion by tribes and clans on the periphery of empires, primarily British and Ottoman, to a centralized state at the hub of the global economy was no mean feat. The discovery of oil was a critical factor but not the only driver toward a centralized state. Saudi Arabia had the political and ideological mass necessary for the emergence of a state prior to the petroleum bonanza. Oil did not provide the catalyst for the creation of a Saudi state; rather it gave the Saudi state global stature and importance. This chapter provides a concise history of Arabia from the inception of Islam through the

rise and fall of the first two Saudi states. It is the backdrop against which the rise of the al-Saud and the ideological mantra of Wahhabi Islam are more readily understood.

Arabia and the Early Islamic State

Prior to the advent of Islam, Arabia had only limited local political cohesion. Some *march* tribes, tribes residing on the frontiers of larger states, on the edges of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires, were more cohesive and played an active role in the political and security structure of the region. The Ghassanids in Syria and the Lakhmids centered on Hira in present day Iraq were the most prominent of these groupings. The former were allies of the Christian Byzantines and formed a buffer against depredations from other Arabian tribes and an ally against the Persians, while the latter served more or less the same purpose for the Zoroastrian Sassanians. There were others as well. The more settled tribal groupings, not surprisingly, were the most influential—the Quraysh in Mecca and Banu Hanifa centered near Yamana, present day Riyadh. No central authority existed in Arabia and what authority and wealth did exist was an outgrowth of the tribal structure and limited trade.[4] By the sixth century, the Banu Quraysh had established themselves as the dominant family and guardians of the haram, an ancient site of polytheistic worship, now occupied by the *Masjid al-Haram*, or Grand Mosque, in Mecca.

It was in this fractured political and religious environment around 610 that the Prophet Muhammad (570-632), a member of the Quraysh tribe and the husband of a prominent merchant woman, Khadija, announced his revelation from God—Islam. This study will not go into great detail about the trials and tribulations of the Prophet in Mecca except to say that his revelation of a strict monotheist religion posed a threat to the established political order and the lucrative income associated with the polytheistic practices that Meccans encouraged at the *haram*. In 619, his wife, Khadija, and his uncle, Abu Talib, both died and with them went his protection from the increasingly hostile environment in Mecca. In 620, the people of Yathrib, or *Medina al-Munawwarah*, approached Muhammad about coming there to serve as a judge and to end the strife among the local tribes. After ensuring the authority of his new position, his followers migrated over a two-year period to Medina where he joined them in 622—the *Hijra* (migration or flight). Here

he established himself and his followers. Strife continued with Mecca until, in 630, the Prophet subdued his opponents and captured Mecca and then defeated other Arab rivals from Taif, establishing an Islamic state. Until his unexpected death in 632, Muhammad focused on acquiring the religious conversion and political loyalties of the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.[5]

During this period of establishing an Islamic state, Mecca was the religious center of the Muslim community but Medina was its political and administrative core. Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, the father-in-law of Muhammad, became his successor. In the wars of the *Rida*, campaigns against rebel tribes following Muhammad's death, Abu Bakr enforced discipline on the Islamic community and asserted the authority of the Caliphate over the Arabian tribes who had viewed their ties to Islam in terms of personal ties to the Prophet. He ruled the Islamic community from Medina until his death in 634. Abu Bakr's first two successors, Umar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634-644), the second of the Rashiduun Caliphs, and Uthman ibn Affan (r. 644-656), the third Caliph, ruled from Medina even as the divisions within the *umma* made political survival more precarious. Between the death of Abu Bakr in 634 and end of Uthman's rule in 656, the umma, or Islamic community of believers, changed.[6] Quarrels between the companions of the Prophet, or *ansar*, and the supporters of Umar and Uthman escalated and massive conquests particularly under Caliph Umar further exacerbated tensions within the community. In 644, a Persian slave assassinated Umar. Uthman also died at the hands of an assassin, isolated both politically and physically from his supporters and unable to defend himself. Uthman was assassinated for showing favoritism to the Umayyad clan. Increasingly violent divisions within the Islamic community made Medina not only an isolated, remote place from which to rule the Islamic Empire, but also a dangerous one.[7] This would have immediate consequences for Arabia.

Political Power Shifts from Arabia

The death of Uthman brought a significant geographic shift in the political center of gravity that relegated the Arabian heartland to the fringe of the Islamic world for 1,200 years. Upon the death of Uthman, Ali bin Abi Talib, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet, became the fourth and final Rashiduun Caliph. Among the Shi'a, Ali is recognized as the first Imam. The Quraysh and particularly its Umayyad clan viewed Ali and his

association with the *ansar* and the *muhajirun* (Muslims who followed the Islamic prophet Muhammad on his Hijra, or withdrawal, from Mecca to Medina in 620-622) known collectively as the *shahaba*, or companions of the Prophet, as a threat to their power and influence. Ali's Qurayshi-Umayyad opposition, led by Al-Zubair bin al-Awwam, rebelled and fled to Basra in Iraq to gain support. Ali followed, and with the support of the tribes of Kufa (Iraq) defeated Al-Zubair and began a systematic purge of the Quraysh from positions of power. He could not, however, remove Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan, the governor of Syria and closest Umayyad relative of the Caliph Uthman.[8]

Rather than destroying Mu'awiya at the Battle of Siffin on the Euphrates River in 657 C.E. when he had his chance, Ali compromised and undermined his standing with his own supporters. Some of those supporters, a group that became known as the Kharijites, viewed themselves as the only pure Muslims. They rejected the Umayyads and Ali who compromised with them. Ali's control dwindled until 661 when a Kharijite assassinated him in the mosque at Kufa. Mu'awiya moved to consolidate his control over Egypt and Iraq, and eventually after establishing his capital in Damascus, the entire Islamic world. In 680, Hussein, Ali's younger son, attempted to raise a revolt from Kufa but was killed along with most of his family by Umayyad troops at Karbala in Iraq. Ali's opposition and then Hussein's martyrdom became the foundational symbols of what would eventually emerge as the Shi'a, or Party of Ali.[9]

During the *fitna*, or civil war, between the Umayyads and the supporters of Ali, the center of political power shifted northward. The struggle for control of the Islamic community occurred between the Umayyads in Damascus and their opponents, most notably those centered in Iraq and Khuzestan, now a western province in Iran, and other newly conquered areas of Persia. At the height of their power, the Umayyads would rule the single greatest Islamic empire that the world would ever see, stretching from southern France to India and from Africa to Central Asia. The Umayyad Caliph ruled through a series of agreements with largely independent governors and military commanders. Tribes from Arabia, particularly Yemeni tribes, continued to form the backbone of the Umayyad military but they were now based and settled in Syria.[10] In northern Arabia, the al-Shammar tribes located in what is now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, were important to stability but peripheral to the political power centers in Damascus and Kufa.[11]

In 749, a combination of centrifugal political, economic, and social forces destroyed the Umayyad Caliphate. The Mesopotamian-based Abbasid Caliphate replaced the Umayyads in what can only be described as a revolution. Abu al-Abbas Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Saffaḥ, a descendant of the Prophet's uncle, used disaffection with the Umayyads to destroy their regime. Because of the strong Persian influence, Persian models of administration replaced the political structures of Damascus. The Abbasid Caliphate gave the new converts to Islam, or *mulawi*, a stake in the new order. The Abbasids built a new capital on the Tigris River—Baghdad. Although the new Caliphate was Sunni dominated, it had a far more tolerant attitude toward the Shi'a and other groups as long as those groups respected the authority of the Caliph. The Persian Khorasanis became the backbone of the military. Within a very short period the new empire adopted an absolutist system of rule that was far more Persian than Arab.[12] Baghdad represented the urbanization of Islamic culture and the sweeping away of Arab caste supremacy. Initially, Sunni Arabs continued to control the system, but Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and the Shi'a worked in the administration and as senior advisors.[13] Even as serious opposition to the Abbasids began to emerge, it came from Umayyad Spain, Fatimid Egypt, Ibadi Oman, Zaydi Yemen, Persia, and North Africa, not central Arabia.

... the Umayyads would rule the single greatest Islamic empire that the world would ever see, stretching from southern France to India and from Africa to Central Asia.

The Hejaz and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina retained their symbolic importance and the coastal areas played a role in trade and commerce, but the interior of Arabia and its tribes largely represented an area that the cosmopolitan empires merely wanted to contain. The cost to occupy, much less control, central Arabia simply outstripped its value; thus the issue for the dominant empires for roughly the next millennium would be how to contain the threat posed by the fractious central Arabian tribes to security, commerce, and stability without bankrupting the treasury. The preferred solution was the creation of a local client ruler or vassal whose loyalty might be suspect but whose interests included limiting threats to stability and commerce.

While the fortunes of containing central Arabia ebbed and flowed, the Arabian coastal areas developed their own specific identities in a symbiotic

relationship with the imperial power dominant in the region at any given time. The most important of these imperial powers were the Ottoman Turks (1299-1923) and the Persian Shi'a Safavid Empire (1501-1736). In the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire emerged as a power in the Gulf, and by the sixteenth century, a struggle between the Sunni Ottoman's and the Persian Shi'a Safavid Empire resulted in the victories of the Ottoman Sultan Selim (1465-1520), also known as "the Grim," over the Safavids and their allies.[14] Selim had obtained a ruling from the *ulema*, religious scholars and legal experts, in Istanbul declaring the Shi'a Safavids apostates. Ottoman muskets, artillery, and military professionalism dealt a crushing defeat to the Safavids.[15]

Selim then turned on his old rivals in Egypt and Syria, the Mamluks of Egypt. In 1516 and 1517, Selim defeated the Mamluks and occupied Cairo. Once he had gained control of Egypt the Sharifan clan in the Hejaz and the Bedouin tribes all pledged their fealty as well. Selim was now the master of most of Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and the Hejaz.[16] The Ottomans then restructured the administration of Arabia and attempted to fold it into the Ottoman system.[17] The Ottoman administrative structure relied on local notables in the coastal areas to maintain relations with, if not control of, the tribes in the interior. Often the sharifs of Mecca would serve as emissaries or representatives of the Ottomans in the interior.[18]

In the Gulf, the Ottomans extended their authority down the coast to include the lands of the Banu Khalid as far as al-Hasa in what is now Saudi Arabia.[19] The Turks attempted to expel the Portuguese who controlled Hormuz and thus the trade of the Gulf. In the mid-sixteenth century, strikes and counterstrikes by the Ottomans and the Portuguese caught the coastal inhabitants of Bahrain, Hormuz, Muscat and other ports in the middle.[20] This coastal activity had little appreciable impact on the interior. The Ottomans sent emissaries to the interior tribes but never sustained a presence there. Any external influence exerted by the Ottomans came indirectly through coastal tribes or the Rashid emirs in what is now northern Saudi Arabia. For the most part, the tribal confederations, settlements, and oases of the region were ruled by local leaders and largely left alone to work out their own problems largely without external interference.[21] By the eighteenth century, the situation in the Arabian interior was a marked contrast to the experience of the rulers of the Arabian Gulf coast and Hejaz where contact with the Ottomans, Portuguese, Dutch or British was more routine.

The development of Saudi Arabia should be understood in this eighteenth century, not as something that began in 1901. There is a continuity that traces from 1744 through the first two states to the contemporary Kingdom. The Saudi state consistently regenerated itself despite near catastrophic setbacks. The First Saudi State (1744-1818) established the model for what was to come dynastically, politically, and ideologically. The unique intersection of the al-Saud and Wahhabi Islam has driven the Saudi experience and sets it apart.

The Ideological Context and the Saudi State

In 1744, Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765) linked his political fortunes to the ideological fortunes of Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab (1703-1792) and a puritanical, unitarian brand of Islam based on a reformist interpretation of Hanbali Islamic law. Ideologically, Wahhabi Islam offered the al-Saud a vehicle for what Benedict Anderson in his work, *Imagined Communities*, called the "nationalist myth." Anderson argued that the United States represented the epitome of success by creating an *imagined community* in which peoples of disparate, unrelated backgrounds bought into a common political mantra and were willing to fight and die for it.[22]

In the case of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi Islam provided an ideological rallying point, a belief system that transcended, to a large extent, the tribal and social structural differences and rivalries that plagued Arab societies. Ideologically, when many think of the United States, the words democracy and capitalism come to mind despite the fact that it is not a democracy but a republic, and capitalism is tempered by government controls. In the case of Iran, the imagined community is Jafari, or Twelver Shi'ism, despite the societal and religious communities' conflicts. For Saudi Arabia, it is Sunni Wahhabi Islam, even though large swaths of the population are Shafai Sunni, the school of law, or *madhhab*, dominant in Egypt and the coastal areas of western and southern Arabia and Southeast Asia, and approximately 10 percent are Twelver Shi'a.

In Saudi Arabia—unlike in most of the other states in the region—identity, loyalty, and political responsibility are not defined solely in terms of a ruling family or borrowed western ideological construct—pan-Arabism, Arab socialism, Ba'thism—but rather through a distinctive ideological concept married to specific political construct and family. The stereotypical view that Saudi Arabian stability is due to the vast funds available to deal with

potential social and political unrest is shallow and simplistic, and ignores the historical record. The durability of the Saudi state predates oil wealth and is due to a politically resilient Arabian dynasty with an ideology that has allowed it to overcome instability while providing political and social legitimacy.

Thus, a brief discussion of Wahhabi Islam, its origins, and its place within the framework of the Islamic community and its theology is essential. This section discusses Sunni Islam and attempts to place the emergence of the Wahhabi sect within its proper context. While the discussion is limited, it will offer some guideposts for a better understanding of Wahhabi Islam's origins and the attractiveness in some quarters of its message.

Wahhabi Islam historically represented a reform movement within the Islamic community. It is derived in large part from the Hanbali School or *madhhab* of Islamic thought—one of the four accepted Sunni *madhhabs*. In Arabic, the term Sunni refers to the compilation of the saying and actions of the Prophet found in the *Sunnah*. A record of the Prophet's actions and sayings are found in the *Kutb al-Sitta* of the *Hadith*. Depending on the school and sect, what is accepted as true varies and the Shi'a have substantially different views. This section will focus on the Sunni context.

Four Sunni *madhhabs* or schools of Islamic law emerged: the *Hanafi*, the *Maliki*, the *Shafai,* and the *Hanbali*. The different schools had their own particular approaches to theological and legal interpretations. Islam was not only the theological basis for a new belief structure but it also provided the legal basis for creating a new society. Among their mainstream adherents, the four schools recognize each other as legitimate. Communal conflicts have resulted from differences in legal interpretations but, for the most part, each recognizes the other.[23] In many respects, the exact nature of the differences relates to the time and place in which they were formed and to the intellectual proclivities of the founders.

In general terms, the four schools emerged between 750 and 850. Imam Numan ibn Thabit Abu Hanafi (699-767) established the first *madhhab* in Kufa, Iraq. Abu Hanafi's family was probably Persian or Afghani. Although Kufa was a hotbed of anti-Umayyad sentiment and largely supported the Abbasid revolt in 750, the Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'far Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Mansur (714-775) imprisoned and executed Abu Hanafi for opposing al-Mansur's rule and refusing to become a judge in the Abbasid administration.

The Hanafi School is regarded as more liberal in the sense that it places significant weight on the role of reason in legal interpretations. The Abbasid Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire and the Mughal Empires selected it as their chosen legal system.[24] The Hanafi School left significant leeway for interpretation and use of reason in applying the law, which made it suited for imperial interpretations and legal approaches to address the multitude of complex, heterogeneous political, economic, social, and cultural environments. This imperial preference is the fundamental reason that it is the largest school of Islamic legal interpretation today.[25]

Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi (715-795) founded the second *madhhab* (Maliki) in Mecca. It differs from the other schools of law in that it includes the actions and statements of the Rashiduun Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali abi Talib, as a part of its *hadith* tradition. It relies not just on the Quran and the words and deeds of the Prophet, but also the words and deeds of the four Orthodox Caliphs as the *salaf* or righteous predecessors. The Maliki School subscribes to the idea of consensus but a consensus based on a much broader set of Islamic legal resources. Today, the Maliki School is the official school of Kuwait, Bahrain, and the U.A.E. and is widely observed in Africa. For centuries, the Grand Mosque in Khairoun in Tunisia was the seat of Maliki learning.[26]

Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafai (767-820), a student of Malik ibn Anas, founded the Shafai School. This third *madhhab* to Islamic law is prominent in Egypt, along the Red Sea, and in the Indian Ocean communities reaching to Southeast Asia. Shafai's primary difference with Malik, his teacher, was his refusal to include the Rashiduun Caliphs among the sources of authority for establishing *sharia*. He only focused on the *hadith* of the Prophet.[27]

Wahhabi Islam and its Roots

The last school founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) is the one that is the primary focus of this study. Its roots were in the Shafai tradition but it took Shafai reliance on the *hadith* of the Prophet even further. Simply put, it is a literalist school that rejects delving into rationalist or philosophical interpretation. Where the Shafai exercised some leeway in legal interpretation and authority, Hanbal rejected this approach. In his view, interpretation was based on the literal texts of the Quran and *hadith*.[28] The Hanbali School allows reasoning by analogy only when the Koran, *hadith*, or consensus is "not available" as sources. More importantly, to stray from the literalist interpretation

by using reason is "a sinful innovation."[29] The Hanbali School fell into disfavor and the number of adherents dwindled soon after its inception because it rejected human reason. The school only found resurgence in the reform movement led by Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century.[30]

In the thirteenth century, it revived due to the efforts of Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328). This period saw the Mongol invasions, the destruction of Baghdad and the Abbasid Caliphate, all of which he attributed to the Islamic community having strayed from the 'true' path of Islam and its "pious ancestors"—*al-salaf al-salih*. Calling for reform, he argued that only a return to the ways of the Prophet and his companions could restore the Islamic community.[31] He attacked Sufism, mystical Islamic practices, as well as philosophical reason and interpretation. He also rejected Shi'ism and the Kharijites. Ibn Taymiyya aimed to break the stranglehold of the staid orthodox *ulema* that he challenged, but his insistence on rigid adherence to the literalism of the Koran and *hadith* locked Islamic interpretation to the earliest orthodoxies of the religion. It tied a much more complex fourteenth century society to the far simpler theological and legal norms of the seventh century.[32]

The implications Ibn Taymiyya's message even in the contemporary era are complicated. One interpretation of Ibn Taymiyya's message follows:

> Man on earth must discover and implement the will of God. The will of God lies enshrined in the Quran and embodied in the *Sunna* of the Prophet. This will of God is the Sharia. A community, which consciously sets out to implement the Sharia, is a Muslim community. But in order to implement the Sharia, the Muslim society must set up certain institutions, the most important of which is the state. No form of the state, therefore, has any inherent sanctity; it possesses sanctity only in so far as it is an effective instrument of the Muslim community.[33]

This argument became a part of most of the Islamic revivalist movements from this time onward.

The idea of returning to the basics of a religion is 'fundamental' to revivalist movements of all stripes. It is the belief that at some point in the past a purer form of the religion held sway among the believers and that this purer form has been corrupted. The revivalist theory associated with these ideas is simplistic, but the actual application of them in political, social and

economic context of a state is something considerably more complicated. Nevertheless, Hanbali and Ibn Taymiyya provided a structural framework for the revivalist movement that would emerge in Arabia in the eighteenth century. This revivalist movement provided the ideological underpinning for a new Arab dynasty in the region.

The eighteenth century was a period of upheaval in the Islamic world. Safavid Shi'a Persia collapsed in 1722. The Ottoman and the Mughal Empires were fraying on the periphery and succumbing to European pressure. This was the world in which Muhammad Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab (1701-1792) was born. He had travelled widely in Arabia, Persia, and Mesopotamia with his father while studying law and theology. His travels had provoked a personal crisis that caused him to reject what he saw as the corruption and decadence of urban Islam. Although from a family of Nejdi scholars, he settled in Medina and studied the teachings of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya.[34] He rejected the notion of multiple schools of Islamic thought and the idea that his approach came out of the Hanbali tradition because in his view there was only one correct practice of Islam and he was teaching it.[35] And, it was from Medina that he began his early campaign to return the Islamic community to the early teachings of the faith. He wrote a tract, *kitab al-tawhid*, attacking the innovations of Sufism, saint cults, and philosophy.[36] Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab believed in the strict adherence among the *muwahhidun* or unitarians to the concept of tawhid. "Only this could lead to the establishment of a just, stable, and powerful society."[37] This rediscovery of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya's traditionalist teachings revived the Hanbali School of Islamic thought in the form of Wahhabi reform movement centering on the absolute oneness of God, the strict adherence to the Koran, and the *Sunna* for religious and temporal guidance had an audience in the Nejd.[38] While largely unpopular in the urban Islamic world, the Wahhabi revival rejuvenated the Hanbali School or madhhab and took root among the tribes of central Arabia. There was, of course, opposition among some of the tribal leaders.[39] However, it fit the much more conservative social context of Arabia.[40] In theory, all four *madhhabs* of Sunni thought recognized each other's legitimacy; in practice, that recognition could be conditional depending on time, place and circumstance.

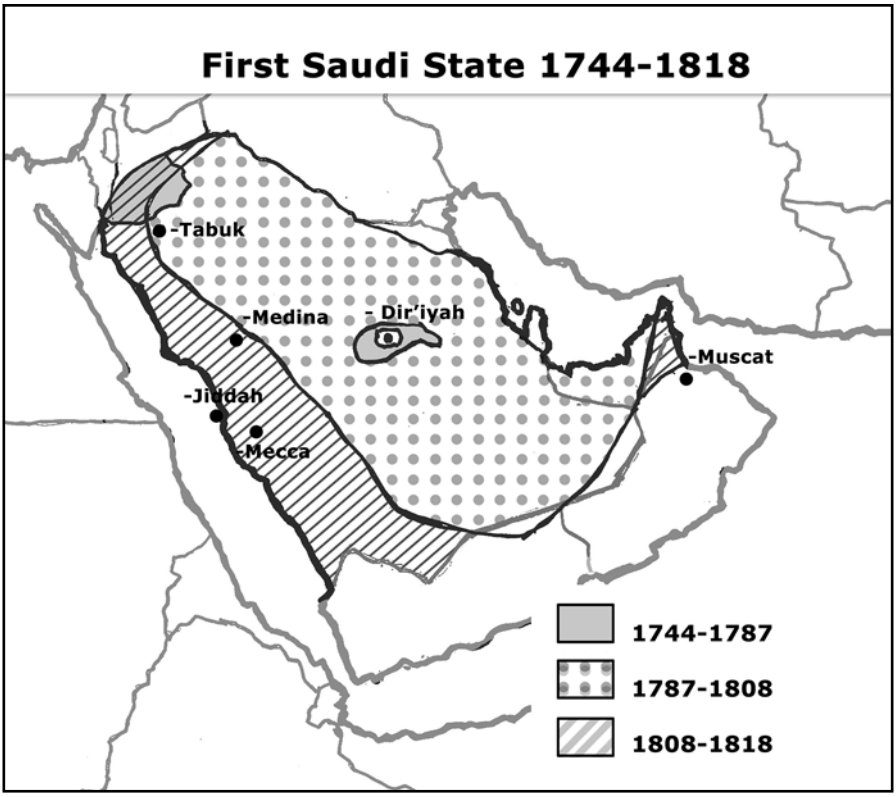

Figure 2. Map of the First Saudi State. Source: U.S. Special Operations Command Graphics.

The Marriage of Politics and Ideology

The first Saudi state materialized in the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1727, Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765) emerged as the local ruler of a small village, Dir'iyah in Nejd. Through his skills as a mediator, warrior and merchant, he established himself as the protector of Dir'iyah and its surrounding area and received tribute from several of the surrounding oases.[41] Despite his political skills, he lacked the wealth and an influential tribal base necessary to exploit his personal political talents. At the same time, Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab, an aspiring religious scholar whose father was a judge in the Nejd, had been pursuing a religious education in Medina, Basra and Hasa. It was at this point that Abd-al-Wahhab returned to the Nejd with his reformist views of Islam.[42]

Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab's message was generally accepted by the populous but his attacks on shrines and saint worship immediately ran afoul of the local authorities. Initially, he had received support from the local emir or tribal leader in Uyaynah, but the emir found himself under fire from the tribal leaders of the Bani Khalid in Hasa and the Ottomans. Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab's enforcement of strict Islamic law angered the Bani Khalid emirs who viewed his message and religious practice as threatening and inflammatory. They ordered him to be killed. Instead, the local ruler banished him and his family. He journeyed to Dir'iyah where his religious reputation had preceded him. Abd-al-Wahhab needed political protection, and Muhammad ibn Saud needed stature and legitimacy for his broader ambitions.[43]

In 1744, the bargain between the al-Saud clan and Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab was struck. In return for adherence to the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam and recognition of Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab as the authority for religious interpretation, the al-Sauds were able to leverage the religious message into political and ideological legitimacy that they would have been hard pressed to accomplish without Abd-al-Wahhab's support. In turn, this newfound legitimacy created a source of wealth in the form of the *zakat* or tithe paid by Muslims.[44] It was the ideological component that made the Saudi—Wahhabi alliance potent because it transcended issues of tribal affiliation and wealth. "Preaching and raids progressed simultaneously" allowing the Saudi leadership to rapidly dominate the region.[45]

The revivalist version of Islam made non-adherents legitimate targets for raiding, and the raiding generated booty for the tribes and more wealth and political power for the al-Saud. Cooperation with the Saud's offered not only temporal rewards but it also offered a path to salvation. The Nejd was no stranger to religious scholars and faith but, with Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab, the message of *tawhid* and the paying of the *zakat* had a major positive impact on Saudi expansion.[46] By Muhammad ibn Saud's death in 1765, the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance dominated most of the Nejd and by the end of eighteenth century, under the leadership of Muhammad's son Abd-al-Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn Saud (1765-1803), Saudi control extended to eastern Arabia.[47] In 1800, Wahhabi raiders captured the port of al-Qatif on the Gulf and the Buraimi Oasis, and threatened Oman. By 1809, the Saudi emirate and its allies dominated the coastal areas of the southern Gulf. The situation resulted in a British expedition to recapture Ras al-Khaimah from them and neutralize the threats to Oman. Success became the undoing of the First Saudi State.[48]

In 1802, Saudi raiders sacked Karbala, the Shi'a holy city and threatened Damascus; captured Mecca in 1803; and captured Medina in 1804. This was too much for the Ottoman imperial administration in Istanbul. Istanbul lacked the resources to repel the Saudis. In 1811, at the request of the Porte in Istanbul, the Egyptians under their independent viceroy, Muhammad Ali (r. 1805-1848) launched a series of offensives and by 1813, had retaken Mecca, Medina and Jidda and removed the Saudi threat to Mesopotamia and Syria. In 1818, Muhammad Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, invaded the Nejd, captured al-Dir'iyah and sent Abdullah ibn Saud, the new Saudi ruler, to Istanbul for beheading.[49] This Egyptian campaign under the titular flag of the Ottoman Porte fit Muhammad Ali's ambitions to take over the government in Istanbul and proclaim himself Sultan. Istanbul's inability to protect pilgrims or the Sharif of Mecca merely strengthened Mohammad Ali's hand. Unfortunately the British blocked his plans.[50] Nevertheless, this Egyptian campaign effectively ended the first Saudi state. Because occupation of the region proved difficult and expensive, the Egyptians eventually withdrew their forces and returned administration of the Nejd to the Banu Khalid on the Gulf coast and the Sharif of Mecca in the Hejaz.[51] Neither arrangement proved to be a long-term solution.

The political and ideological coupling of the Al-Saud to Wahhabi Islam had demonstrated its limitations. Two valuable lessons emerged. First, Ikhwan commanders and Bedouin tribesmen could be a liability. For the first 50 years, they served the Saudi Emirate well. As their raiding increased, the Wahhabi bands provoked infinitely stronger political powers—the Ottomans and the British. Information about what the Saudi emirs actually thought the risks were is virtually non-existent, but there is no indication that there was any concern about provoking stronger powers. The profits of raiding and religious fervor likely blinded them to the risks. Second had the Saudi emirs recognized the risks; it was potentially dangerous to attempt to reign in their Bedouin raiders—the Ikhwan. Riding the tiger is one thing; controlling it is another. The connection between the two—overreach and control—would have implications for the future.

During the period of nominal Ottoman-Egyptian control of the Nejd from 1818 to 1824, remnants of the al-Saud family and opposition local tribal leaders fought for control. That the Sauds were able to contest control at all was remarkable. After a short-lived effort by Emir Abdullah's brother, eventually, Turki bin Abdullah, the grandson of the first Saudi Emir, emerged as

the leader. Between 1820 and 1824, Turki fought the hostile tribes, the Banu Khalid, and the Egyptians. This resistance reinforced the growing view in Cairo and Istanbul that the effort to control the Arabian interior was simply not worth it. For his part, Turki recognized the limits of his power and was careful not to push the Egyptians too far particularly with regard to those Egyptian troops in the Hejaz providing security for Haj caravans.[52]

By 1824, Turki had reestablished Saudi rule in the Nejd and moved his capital from Dir'iyah to Riyadh. Over the next six years, Turki systematically defeated the Banu Khalid and, in 1830, took Hasa and several of the coastal towns on the Gulf. The British were now the arbiters of Gulf security. The Emir of Ajman, Rashid bin Hamad, asked Turki to appoint him "the Wahhabi vice regent for the Pirate coast" (contemporary U.A.E.) and looked forward to resuming his piratical ways under the Wahhabi banner. Turki understood the risk. According to the British Assistant Resident in the Gulf, Lieutenant Hennell, Turki was "more enlightened than his predecessors" and expressed his desire to be on "friendly terms" with the British. Renouncing designs on the southern coast and piracy, Turki focused his attention elsewhere. He demanded that the Al-Khalifa of Bahrain surrender their fort at Dammam to the new Saudi state. The al-Khalifa appealed to the British who repeated their position on Saudi demands, namely "the British policy in the Gulf was confined to the suppression of piracy; it was not concerned with the internal affairs of Arabia."[53]

The rise of the Second Saudi State had other implications as well. Turki's commander at Hasa, Umar ibn Ufaisan, mounted an expedition to Buraimi Oasis between Oman and the present day UAE. He occupied the oasis and demanded the payment of the Wahhabi *zakat* from all the surrounding tribes. They flocked to his banner expecting to gain enormously from spoils of raiding as tribal allies of the Wahhabis. Ufaisan gained the temporary submission of Abu Dhabi and reached an accommodation with Said the Great (Said ibn Sultan Al Bu Said) in Oman, whereby the latter paid tribute to the Saudi emir. Said had the means to resist the Saudis but, having moved his capital to Zanzibar, he lacked the interest. It caused a stir among the British in Bombay but the Viceroy in India, Lord William Bentinck, asserted that the British government's sole issue was trade. In addition, he doubted that Ufaisan would really attempt to annex Oman, but if he did, then the implications for shipping and naval power in the region would require intervention.[54]

By 1834, Turki claimed much of Arabia. In a dispatch to Bombay the British resident explained Turki's position, "Tookey bin Saood was now the only authority on the continent of Arabia, and…both citizens and Bedouins, maritime as well as inland tribes, having all acknowledged his supremacy, he was in fact the ruler of the country, including Haajar, Oman, and the coast from Jaalan to Kateef."[55] The British reported that Turki's representative was extremely popular among the people of the Qawasimi emirates of Sharja and Ras al-Khaymah. In 1834, Turki was assassinated by his cousin Mishari ibn Abd-al-Rahman ibn Saud who proclaimed himself emir. Feisal bin Turki (r. 1834-1838, 1843-1865), the slain emir's son, recalled Ufaisan from the southern coast and, after taking Riyadh and killing Mishari, Feisal became emir.[56]

In 1838, Feisal refused to pay his tribute to the Egyptians in the Hejaz. The Egyptians mounted an expedition, captured Riyadh and took Feisal as a prisoner back to Cairo. They appointed Khalid ibn Saud ibn Abd al Aziz (r. 1838-1841) as ruler. He, in turn, was overthrown by Abdullah ibn Thunayyan ibn Ibrahim in 1841. In 1843, Feisal escaped from Cairo and with the help of his supporters returned to Riyadh, forced Khalid to flee, and once again became the emir.[57] Feisal resumed his plans to take control of the Gulf. After gaining control of the Nejd, he began to make demands on the al-Khalifa in Bahrain and laid plans for a return to the southeast coast and Oman. By 1851, the British felt compelled to issue Feisal a warning. The British informed Feisal that they did not recognize his position in Bahrain, on the southeastern coast, or with regard to Oman, and that any attempt to enforce his claims would be met by British force. The British blockaded al-Qatif in company with the Bahraini fleet.[58]

In the mid-1850s, the British deployed ground and naval forces to the Gulf to deal with problems in Persia, and this had a quieting effect on the ambitions of all the inhabitants of the region including Feisal in Riyadh. In the late 1850s, Feisal again moved against Bahrain, and once again the British made it clear that they would not countenance any action that would "disturb the maritime peace" in the Gulf.[59] Feisal remained careful not to antagonize the British, but in a February 1865 visit with the British Resident for the Gulf, Colonel Lewis Pelly, he reiterated his claim to the region. "Virtually all of Arabia including Kuwait and Muscat was under his authority, having been given to him by God to rule."[60] Later that year Feisal died and a quarter century of instability and strife ensued. Three different princes ruled seven different times. Feisal's son, Abdullah ibn Faisal ibn Turki, ruled three

different times: 1865-1871, 1873-1875, and 1876-1889. His arch rival and half-brother, Saud ibn Faisal ibn Turki, ruled twice in 1871 and from 1873-1875. Abd-al-Rahman, a third brother, ruled twice from 1875-1876 and 1889-1891. In the end, the emir of Hail, Muhammad ibn Rashid, took advantage of the situation.[61] Rashid intervened on behalf of a claimant, occupied Riyadh and, in 1891, defeated the Saudis and their allies forcing the most prominent Saudi claimant, Abd-al-Rahman ibn Abdullah, to seek refuge in Kuwait. The troubles of the Second Saudi State instilled a valuable political lesson about the risks and dangers of succession and conflict within the Saud family into Saudi approaches to rule.[62]

... once again the British made it clear that they would not countenance any action that would "disturb the maritime peace" in the Gulf.

The role of the Second Saudi State was critical to the continuity of al-Saud rule in Arabia. Emir Turki was a relatively strong ruler. Emir Feisal had his problems but he recovered much of the territory ruled by his father and, though at a distinct disadvantage, he pressed old Saudi claims in southeast Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain. He also caused the Egyptians to rethink their presence in the Nejd and withdraw, leaving him as the real power there. Given the utter destruction of the First Saudi State, it is remarkable that a second state reemerged at all, much less within two years of that defeat. Historians referring to the "fragile Saudi revival" have focused on the period after 1865.[63] Those years were chaotic. In the case of the Second Saudi State, succession rivalries reached such proportions that a part of the family sought the intervention of an outside political power, the al-Rashid of Hail in northern Saudi Arabia, and that brought total political collapse and outside control. This constitutes the critical lesson from the Second Saudi State—the failure of the family to sublimate its ambitions to the greater good of the whole can bring with it disaster. This will be tested again in the future.

Summary

In discussing Saudi Arabia and its origins in the marriage of politics and ideology—the al-Saud and Wahhabi Islam, some like Daryl Champion describe it as a fundamental contradiction that inexplicably continues to function.[64] A better explanation is simpler and more straightforward. Muhammad ibn

Abd-al-Wahhab provided ideological legitimacy and a revenue stream to the political ambitions of a local ruler and both teacher and ruler benefited from the synergy and at a time of the Ottoman's regional loss of control. In the eighteenth century, decay and corruption undermined the rule of the Ottomans as well as the Safavids and Mughals. It also produced the social and economic dislocation that was the basis of discontent that drove religious reform. Further, the union of religious reform and political ambition in an unstable environment appealed to an unsophisticated tribal society in which *ghaza*, or raiding, was a political, economic, and social fixture. Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab's conservative interpretation of Islam fit the environment perfectly because it lent itself to narrowed interpretations of religious or ideological purity. In addition, the idea that much of the Islamic world

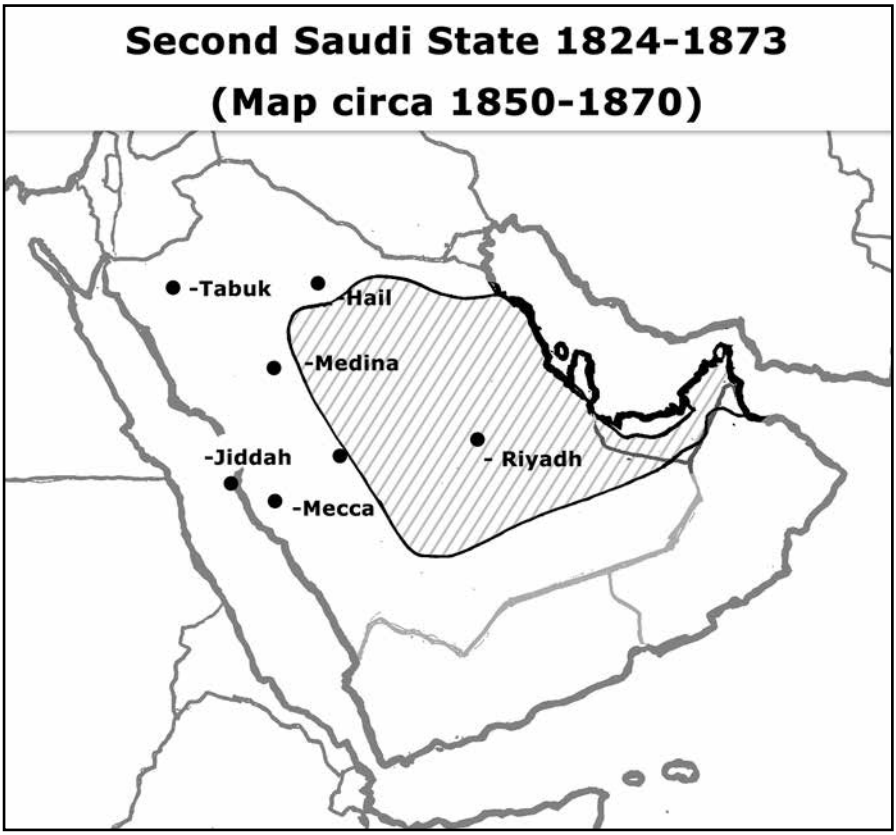

Figure 3. Map of the Second Saudi State. Source: U.S. Special Operations Command Graphics.

outside central Arabia had reverted to a state of *jahilliya*, or pre-Islamic existence, appealed to the exceptionalist self-image and pride of the Nejdi *muwahhidun*, or unitarians.[65] In the late nineteenth century, the success of the Wahhabi reform movement challenged Ottoman political and religious legitimacy and resulted in attempts by the Ottomans to reemphasize their role as keeper of the caliphate and the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina and to attempt to reassert control in Arabia.[66]

The political ambitions of the al-Saud flourished because of the same dislocation that produced and allowed Wahhabi Islam to survive. The Ottoman Empire decline opened the way for those with ambition and ability to advance. In the Nejd, Muhammad bin Saud's realization that Wahhabi exceptionalism coupled with his political ambition were a means by which the al-Saud could transcend the political, economic, and social status quo of the region. Tribal affiliation and imperial sponsorship were no longer the determining gauges for influence and power; ideological motivations had superseded them.

The Al-Saud had to come to terms with practical political concerns. The marriage of al-Saud political competence and the exceptionalist Islamic doctrines of Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab created a powerful new force in the Nejd. Eventually in the broader context of Arabia, Al-Saud leadership lacked the internal political controls to deal with the broader reality of power and politics outside of Arabia. Ambition and lack of control brought overreach. The inability to exercise control undid decades of skillful maneuvering and hard-fought gains. Ultimately, the invasion and capture of the Hejaz and the strict Islamic interpretations imposed there resulted in the utter destruction of the First Saudi State in 1818.

The Second Saudi State underscored the vitality and potency of the original political and ideological marriage represented by the First Saudi State. The collapse of the Second Saudi state in the late nineteenth century highlighted another threat that was just as dangerous as the overreach of the first. Succession disputes undermined the state and made the Saud vulnerable to outside forces. Not only were the traditional enemies of the Saud—the Banu Khalid, the al-Rashid, and the Hashemites to name three—looking for an opportunity to take their local competition down a notch, but also the disputes encouraged a resurgent Ottoman interest in the Nejd. Whether it was a result of the Ottoman attempts to modernize during the *tanzimat* reforms is not clear; what is evident is a focused interest in Istanbul about

expanding Ottoman control to the east. The Ottomans saw an opportunity to reassert control in Arabia by intervening on behalf of one of the feuding Saudi leaders was just too great a temptation.[67] The end result was the destruction of the Second Saudi State and its occupation by an Ottoman vassal, the al-Rashid of Hail.

The lessons learned by the Saud between 1744 and 1901 would leave a lasting impression on the founder of the Third Saudi State, Abd-al-Aziz ibn Abd-al-Rahman al-Saud. In many respects, they form the bedrock of the principles of rule today in Saudi Arabia: conservative foreign policy avoiding overreach; consensus-based inclusive family rule to the maximum extent possible; conservative approach for social change; and adherence to an exceptionalist form of Islam.

2. Ibn Saud and the Founding of Saudi Arabia

Although the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance survived a major disaster in 1818, in 1891, it appeared that the chaos of the previous 25 years and the rise of the al-Rashid emirate in Hail might actually spell the end of al-Saud influence in the Nejd. That a Third Saudi State emerged within a decade is another testament to the strong political ties between the Wahhabi ideological and Saud family and the identification with the Nejd and its tribes. In 1902 when Abd-al-Aziz ibn Abd-al-Rahman al-Saud, known as Ibn Saud, launched a campaign from Kuwait, the al-Rashid and their Ottoman backers were caught flatfooted. The rise of the Third Saudi state and in particular the political and social acumen of Ibn Saud is fundamental to understanding not only the process through which Saudi Arabia came to be but also the approach to rule and diplomacy that would take the Saudi state through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Drawing on the strategic experiences of the first two Saudi states, Ibn Saud offered key innovations to policy that would allow the state to survive and prosper. He understood that in foreign policy the state needed a reliable "Great Power" ally and as a corollary, the state needed to assert its control over elements that threatened stability.

The Rise of the Third Saudi State

Although they were not exactly from the tribal group, the al-Rashid, the Ottoman vassals who had destroyed the Second Saudi State, had family and trading ties with the al-Shammar tribal confederation. The connections were close enough that the differences between the two groups were invisible to most outside observers. The al-Rashid political base in Hail included sedentary elements of the Banu Tamim and other tribal groups as well. The political construct of the al-Rashid with their Ottoman support and their symbiotic relationship with the Shammar confederation followed traditional lines of power and tribal influence in Arabia; it lacked an ideological component. While the Rashids were obviously Muslim, they had no special allegiance or preference per se for any particular Islamic school of thought;

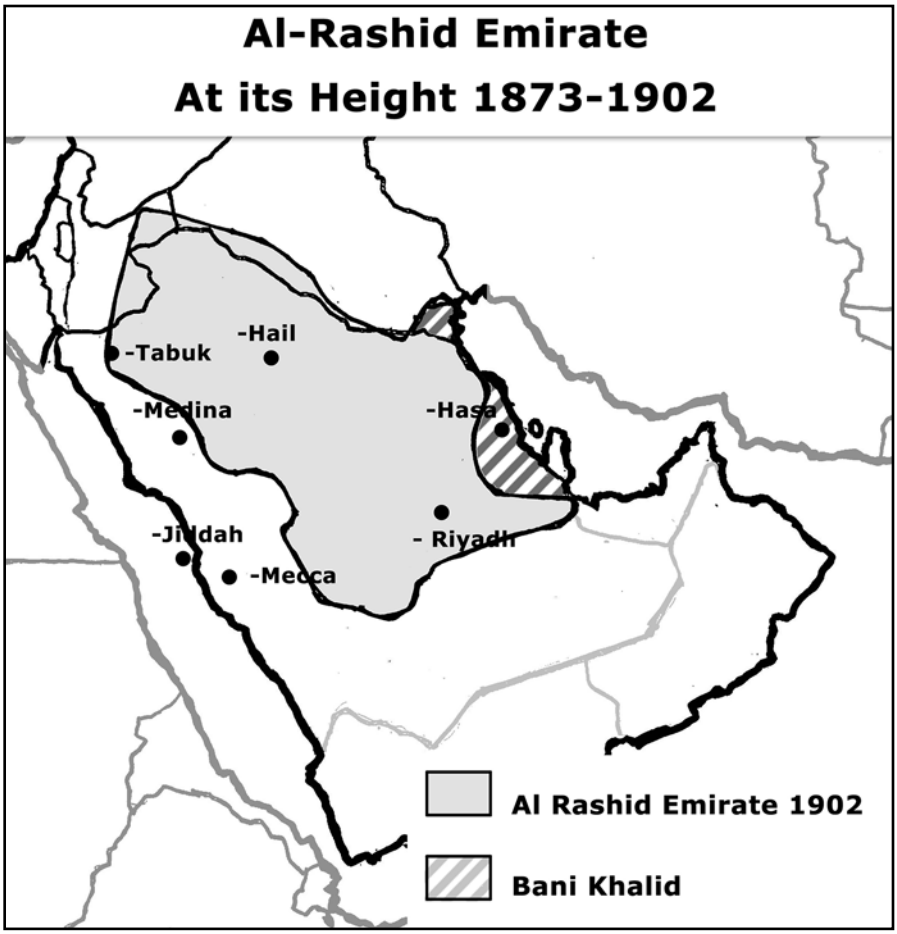

Figure 4. Map of the al-Rashid Emirate. Source: U.S. Special Operations Command Graphics.

therefore, their political ambitions had little or no ideological underpinning. And, from their perspective, they did not need one—they were the long-standing rulers of Hail, had the allegiance of the al-Shammar tribal confederation, and the blessing of the Ottoman Porte in Istanbul.

These factors seemed to guarantee al-Rashid dominance in the Nejd for the foreseeable future. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Shammar had lost land and power in the face of earlier Saudi expansion and then had faced further setbacks in confrontations with the Egyptian troops sent to control the region. Ottoman administrators and punitive expeditions

had difficulty distinguishing Saudi tribes from al-Shammar. In the mid-nineteenth century, al-Rashid support allowed the al-Shammar to resist both Egyptian punitive expeditions and attempts by the Second Saudi State to expand at their expense. Eventually, the al-Rashid, under Muhammad ibn Rashid (r. 1869-1897), consolidated their position and created a rudimentary standing military force. Under Muhammad, Rashidi domains extended from the borders of Aleppo and Damascus to Basra, and claims included parts of Oman and Asir.[68]

With the collapse of the Second Saudi State, the Qasim region and Riyadh were incorporated into the al-Rashid area of influence and control. To enforce this control, the al-Rashid had developed multiple sources of military support—the al-Shammar tribes, independent tribes, the emir's slaves and guards, and the drafts from towns and villages. While the al-Rashid physically controlled certain areas, there were areas of influence where authority was more nuanced. These areas were not controlled in an administrative sense but rather through influence created by periodic raids or the threat of raids. More importantly, the al-Rashid found an ally in the Turks. In the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman's were attempting to reassert their control in Arabia. They had occupied the Arabian littoral and established themselves at Hasa and along the coast down to Qatar. For the Ottomans, campaigning in the Nejd was not only difficult but it was also expensive. Using the al-Rashid as a proxy, Ottomans saw a way to eliminate Saudi influence in the central Nejd more economically.[69] Where the al-Saud had demanded the payment of the *zakat* as a symbol of their religious and temporal authority, the Al-Rashid demanded the *zhuwwa* or tribute.[70]

The exiled Abd-al-Rahman bin Feisal bin Turki al-Saud, his son Abd-al-Aziz and family spent 10 years in Kuwait, where they were safe from the al-Rashid. Kuwait had a profitable relationship with Ottoman Basra in Iraq; there was little incentive to upset that relationship over the exiled al-Saud clan, but they discreetly backed Ibn Saud's re-establishment of the Saudi state. One can speculate about why the al-Sabah, the ruling family of Kuwait, made this decision. Perhaps Ibn Saud's presence was viewed as a bigger problem than offering him enough assistance to reinitiate his campaign in the Nejd. Perhaps they believed that he would fail and the Rashids would eliminate him. There was an additional significant factor: the al-Sabah feared Ottoman and al-Rashid commercial competition and were not particularly concerned about retaliation because, although an independent Ottoman

possession, they had signed a treaty of protection with the British in 1899 which prevented the Turks from undermining the al-Sabah.[71]

In 1899, the British pressured the Ottomans to grant Kuwait autonomy and London entered into a series of treaties with the emirate. German and Ottoman plans to build a railroad from Baghdad to Kuwait City motivated the British to act. With the British security guarantee, any movement against Kuwait would invite problems with the British, which neither the al-Rashid nor the Ottomans were in a position to contemplate.[72] Perhaps, as important as the British guarantee, the al-Rashid did not appear to take the possibility of the resurgent al-Saud movement very seriously. Kuwait offered a safe haven from which the al-Saud could plot their next move.

Abd-al-Aziz ibn Abd-al-Rahman (Ibn Saud) was a boy when his family sought refuge in Kuwait in 1890. A decade later, he had developed into an astute, charismatic, physically imposing man. He had no intention of sitting by and accepting the life of an exile. In addition to his personal strengths, other factors played in his favor. First, al-Rashid rule in the central Nejd was deeply resented by many of the old tribal allies of the First and Second Saudi States. Rather than the political center of and partners in an aggressive expansionist emirate, the tribes of the central Nejd found themselves ruled by outsiders. Second, Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Rashid (r. 1869–97) had died and his successor, an adopted nephew, Abd al-Aziz bin Mutʿib, (r. 1897–1906), was hard pressed to maintain control over the tribal factions on which he depended for power. The al-Rashid power structure was a traditional tribal one with all the inherent weaknesses of maintaining control over autonomous elements.[73] In short, there was no dynamic personality or overarching ideological component to build consensus and legitimize political authority. The al-Saud solved that issue in 1744 when Muhammad al-Saud embraced Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab.

Ideologically, Wahhabi Islam provided legitimacy and political leverage for the al-Saud. The al-Rashid lacked the mantel of religious authority, handicapping their ability to enforce political discipline in a society that had never known such discipline. Wahhabi Islam also fit the exceptionalist narrative of the First and Second Saudi states, namely the tribes of the central Nejd had a unique place and mission to purify the *Dar al-Islam*, the Islamic world or literally the 'house of Islam'. Best of all, Wahhabi Islam was profitable because it condoned raiding against infidels and apostates. Wahhabi Islam's appeal carried the al-Saud through the catastrophe of 1818, and now

in the early twentieth century, it would create an ideological and economic basis for the regeneration of the Saudi state. When taken together, these elements produced an environment where the Saudi-Wahhabi spark needed only a catalyst to reignite the Nejd, and Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud was that spark.

For years, Abd-al-Rahman and his son, Ibn Saud, with the help of the Kuwaiti emir, Mubarak bin Sabah (r. 1896-1915) also known as Mubarak the Great, plotted against the al-Rashid to return the al-Saud to the Nejd.[74] In January 1902, Ibn Saud and a small band of followers crossed the desert and slipped into Riyadh undiscovered. They killed the al-Rashid governor, surprised the local garrison and reestablished themselves in the Nejd. Local tribes and other exiles flocked to join them. The al-Rashid appealed to the Ottomans for support and, in 1904, a combined Ottoman-al-Rashid force initially defeated the al-Saud. Undeterred, the al-Saud waged an effective guerrilla war against the al-Rashid and their Ottoman allies. In 1906, the al-Rashid emir, Abd al-Aziz bin Mutʿib, was killed in battle by Ibn Saud's forces, so the al-Rashids and their Ottoman allies withdrew to the north. The founding of the Third Saudi State, while not totally secure, had reestablished its base at Riyadh and in the Nejd on which to build.[75]

Given his experience in Kuwait, Ibn Saud realized that an alliance with the British had its advantages. Particularly during the early stages of reestablishing the emirate, he sought British help against the al-Rashid and their Ottoman allies. Despite the support of the British agent in the Gulf, Sir Percy Cox, the British refused support. The British Secretary of State and the Viceroy for India under whose purviews the Gulf lay, merely restated the official British policy on non-intervention in the internal affairs of Arabia. Officially, the British left the door open telling Ibn Saud that the alliance had been rejected because the Saudi state was "not a Gulf state." One reason the British could not support the al-Saud, was the fact that strategically they were propping up the teetering Ottoman Empire and had no desire to contribute to its collapse.[76] Ibn Saud found himself largely on his own in confronting the Ottomans, while in Istanbul, the new Turkish rulers continued to see the British as responsible for the unrest in the Nejd and Iraq.[77]

One reason the British could not support the al-Saud ... they were propping up the teetering Ottoman Empire and had no desire to contribute to its collapse.

Because of increasing friction with the Ottomans, the British sent Cox's assistant, Captain William Henry Irvine Shakespeare, to Arabia to maintain contact with Ibn Saud. This caused the Young Turks, a group of Turkophile reformers, now ruling in Istanbul to suspect British motives in the Gulf, and gave Ibn Saud a conduit for continued entreaties to the British to assist him in ejecting the Turks from the coast and out of Hasa. Despite support from Shakespeare and Cox, the British government refused to help. Ibn Saud took the situation into his own hands and launched an attack on Hasa in May 1913. The Saudis took the fort defending Hasa by surprise and allowed the 1,200-man Turkish garrison safe-conduct out of the area. He then drove the Turks from Qatif and other ports on the Gulf while at the same time assuring the

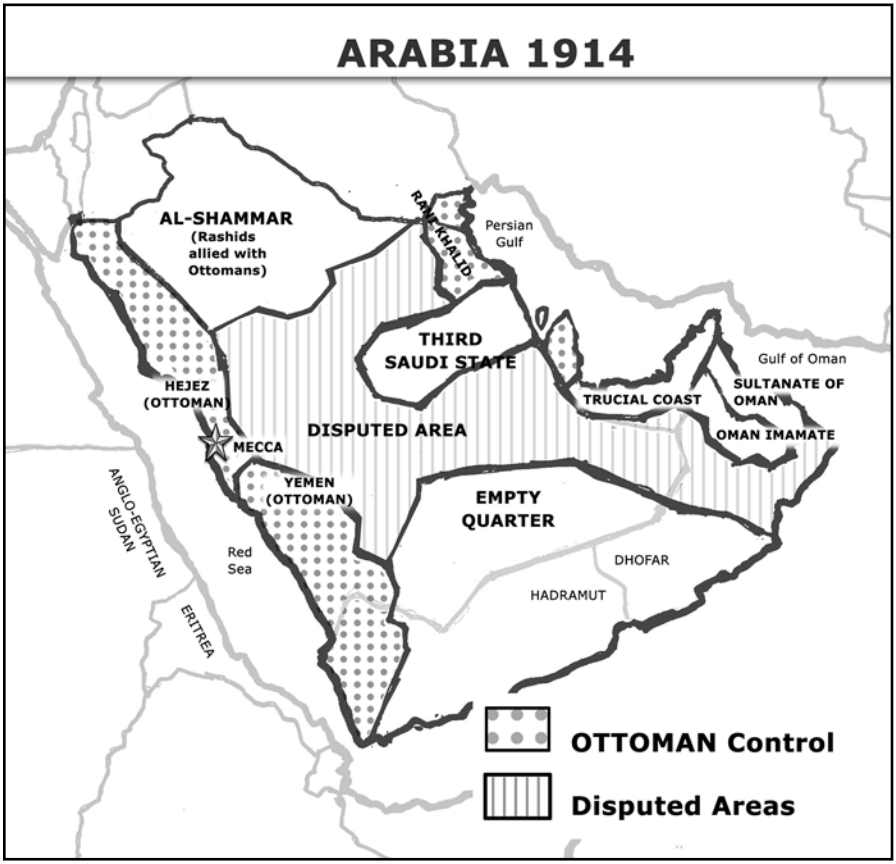

Figure 5. Map of 1914 Arabia. Source: U.S. Special Operations Command Graphics.

Turkish governor in Basra of his allegiance to the Porte. Having secured the basis for what he believed would be an agreement with the British; Ibn Saud was deeply chagrined to learn that the British had signed an agreement with the Turks, recognizing their sovereignty over the Arabian coast and ordering Cox and company to cease any discussions with the al-Saud. The Turks then offered to sign a convention with Ibn Saud if he would recognize Ottoman sovereignty over the Nejd in return for their recognition of his autonomy as the local ruler. At the same time, the Turks provided new arms and support to the al-Rashid to pressure Ibn Saud. "Disillusioned by the British and fearing the worse from the Turks, in May 1914 Ibn Saud finally signed a treaty that formalized his status as a Turkish vassal."[78] He was playing a sophisticated waiting game and the wait was very short.

In August 1914, World War I broke out and the Ottomans allied themselves with Germany. The British now needed an ally in eastern Arabia to complement their Hashemite ally in the west. The war presented Ibn Saud with an opportunity to gain his long-sought agreement with the British, but it was now an agreement of dubious value. Ibn Saud was convinced that he could deal with the al-Rashid, the Hashemites, and the British, who were committed to defeating the Ottomans under any circumstances. Nevertheless, Shakespeare returned to solicit Ibn Saud's assistance in January, 1915; the ruler of the Nejd agreed in principle to support the British saying: "We Wahhabis hate the Turks only less than we hate the Persians for the infidel practices which they have imported into the true and pure faith revealed to us in the Koran."[79] In December 1915, an Anglo-Saudi Treaty was signed granting Ibn Saud a subsidy, weapons and support, and recognizing his rule in the Nejd, Hasa, Qatif, Jubail, and all the dependencies. It also stipulated that he would not sign other agreements without British approval and that he would refrain from aggressive moves against Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the Trucial States and Oman.

The treaty did not oblige Ibn Saud to actively support the British and, shrewdly, Ibn Saud resisted British attempts during the war to press him into precipitous offensive action against the al-Rashid and their Ottoman allies. At the same time, he carried on a secret correspondence with the Ottoman governor of Syria assuring him that he was still loyal and that he had to humor the British because of the local threat that they posed.[80] The lesson that Ibn Saud took from his experiences with the British in the decade

before the war was that they could not be trusted and would pursue their own interests regardless.

In 1916, the war was not going well for the British in the Middle East. The Mesopotamian campaign aimed at Baghdad was a study in incompetence. When the war began, the British believed that the conquest of Mesopotamia could be accomplished in short order. Their 1916 attempt to capture Baghdad met with disaster. In April, the invasion force surrounded by Turkish troops at Kut al-Amara was forced to surrender—most of the prisoners either died in a death march north or in captivity. In Cairo, the British supported Sharif Hussein as the leader of a unified Arab Revolt and included as his supporters, the Sauds and al-Rashid—all devoted, committed enemies. In India, the Viceroy and his advisors, including Sir Percy Cox and Major Shakespeare, believed that the Sauds were a far stronger candidate to upend the Turks and their supporters in the region. Officials in India believed that between the *jihad* declared by the Ottomans in Istanbul against the British and the policies supported by Arab Officers in Cairo, a Muslim movement could emerge that would threaten the British position in India. As Fromkin put it:

> As the war progressed, British officials who ruled India increasingly came to believe that their most dangerous adversaries were neither the Turks nor the Germans, but the British officials governing Egypt; for despite India's protests, British Cairo went ahead with the intrigues in Mecca.[81]

After assurances from India that his position would not be compromised vis-à-vis the Hashemites, Ibn Saud agreed to support the British. He attended a coordinating conference in Kuwait and accepted a 5,000 British pound subsidy per month, 3,000 rifles, four machine guns, and ammunition; he returned home and did nothing.[82]

In the meantime, the Hashemites and the Sauds jockeyed for position in a post-war Arabia no longer controlled by the Turks. This meant that both sides supported or fought tribes based not on their loyalties to the British or Turks but on their loyalties to the Hashemites or Sauds. Sharif Hussein, always difficult, became almost impossible for the British to deal with as he saw the potential to realize his dream of ruling the entire Ottoman Arab world. This would play directly into the hands of Ibn Saud in the post war era. Finally in early 1919, Ibn Saud moved against the al-Rashid putting them on the defensive. Ibn Saud was husbanding his strength for the post-war

struggle against the al-Rashid (without their Ottoman allies) and for the more serious struggle against Hashemites who were still the British ally in the Hejaz. Aware of the hostility between the Hashemites and the al-Saud, the British planned to use the al-Rashid as a balancing force to keep them in line—so much for British plans.[83]

Post-World War I and the Creation of Saudi Arabia

When the war ended and the Turks departed, the British found themselves subsidizing and arming both sides in a new war between the Sharif of Mecca and the Emir of the Nejd. The focal points of the struggle were the small but strategic oasis towns of Turaba and Khurma. By 1919, Wahhabi proselyting had brought the situation to a boiling point, and Hussein ordered his son Abdullah with a very large, well-equipped force to capture the towns and move against the Nejd. In May 1919, Ibn Saud's tribal Ikhwan allies surprised the Hashemites and utterly destroyed the force. This was a stunning victory—tribal warriors on camel and horseback, armed with swords, spears, and rifles utterly annihilated the well-armed, modern Hashemite force. Alarmed, the British demanded that Ibn Saud halt his forces and accept an armistice, and he appeared to comply. The British had great difficulty in getting the thoroughly defeated Hashemites and the stubborn Sharif of Mecca to accept the armistice. Not wanting to provoke the British, Ibn Saud focused his next campaigns first on Asir and then on the al-Rashid. In the meantime, the British reevaluated their position in the region—it appeared that London and Cairo had backed the wrong horse.[84]

The British had intended to use the al-Rashid to counter the al-Saud but their plan collapsed when the al-Rashid emir was assassinated in 1920. An internecine struggle among the al-Rashid and their allies ensued and Ibn Saud took advantage.[85] In 1921, Ibn Saud captured Hail which ended any hope that the al-Rashid might challenge him. As Ibn Saud moved to consolidate his control over Rashidi territory, his raiders fought with British clients in Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait. In 1922, at the expense of the Hashemites in the Hejaz and the Yemeni Imam, Ibn Saud eliminated the Idrisi rule in Asir and added it to his territory. Despite a five-year truce signed in 1921, Ibn Saud held the advantage with significant territorial gains.

The (London) Times correspondent in the region pointed out that Ibn Saud would eventually eliminate Hashemite rule in the Hejaz. The British

were at a loss: "We shall look like fools all over the East if our puppet is knocked off his perch as easily as this."[86] There was nothing that the British could do. The British ended their subsidies to all combatants in the region. From Ibn Saud's vantage point, the Hejaz now looked like a means to recoup lost revenue; however, it had to be accomplished with considerable finesse. The last thing that Ibn Saud wanted was to provoke British intervention.[87] The British threat of intervention or in some cases actual intervention prevented Ibn Saud from dominating almost all of Arabia.[88]

In 1922, Sir Percy Cox negotiated a compromise border settlement with Ibn Saud regarding Kuwait and Iraq. Almost simultaneously the conflict with the Hashemites reignited. Border disputes and rights of pilgrims from the Nejd on the Haj set the region on edge. In March, 1924, two days after the announcement in Istanbul of the end of the Ottoman Caliphate, Hussein bin Ali (1854-1931), the Hashemite Sharif of Mecca and self-proclaimed King of the Hejaz proclaimed himself Caliph in Amman. There could be no compromise with the Hashemites now. In a quick campaign, Ibn Saud captured Taif, then Mecca, and besieged Jidda and the coastal cities. Hussein abdicated and fled into exile. Ibn Saud wanted to avoid British intervention and, at the same time, gain support in the broader Islamic community for his rule over the Holy Cities. Ibn Saud made assurances to London, to the Muslim communities in Egypt and Muslim Indians concerning access to Mecca and Medina. By 1926, Ibn Saud had completely outmaneuvered the last Hashemite, Ali ibn Hussein, and been proclaimed King of the Hejaz.[89] His realm stretched from the Arabian Gulf to the Red Sea and, in the north and south was bounded by British-controlled clients. Ibn Saud understood the implications of overreaching and challenging the British and he had no intention of doing that. Although controlled, Ibn Saud's hostility toward the British creations of Transjordan and Iraq under Hashemite rule would be a recurring issue.[90]

This rapid expansion of territory and power had serious repercussions. The British now made it clear that the newly formed states of Trans-Jordan and Iraq were off limits to Saudi raiding. In November 1925, in the agreements of Hadda and Bahra, Ibn Saud agreed to these conditions and to the stipulation that the border was closed to tribal migrations without written permission. The agreement angered many of the Ikhwan who saw the agreement as a repudiation of the Wahhabi mandate for jihad. This agreement also angered the tribes who found their nomadic lives interrupted. And, finally,

it was accompanied by a decree from Ibn Saud that abolished the tradition of tribal lands and claimed them for the state. This decree was a part of a systematic attempt to shift the Ikhwan to a more sedentary life style. In 1927, the British recognized Ibn Saud as the ruler of the Nejd, Hejaz and Asir and, in turn, Saud recognized British interests in the Gulf.[91]

Controlling the Tribes and Establishing the State

The conquest of what would become Saudi Arabia was largely complete, but a significant problem remained. The Ikhwan and the tribal forces were both the source of conquest and regime support and a source of instability within the fragile state. In the aftermath of the First World War, Ikhwan raids had encroached on British controlled or administered territories on multiple occasions. In the years following the end of the World War, Ikhwan raids into Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait threatened to bring British intervention. Being tribal, the Ikhwan simply had no concept of borders and raiding was the preferred blood sport. In 1922, Ikhwan raiders wiped out an entire village in Transjordan. They were pursued and destroyed by British aircraft and armored cars, and the few survivors were punished by Ibn Saud for provoking the British. Wahhabi inspired tribal practice provided the Saudi state with an ideology that made it far more potent than its neighboring competitors but unchecked it threatened the very existence of the state. In essence, the requirements of twentieth century state founding clashed with the ancient ethos of tribal behavior and a literal translation of the Koran.

The Ikhwan's concept of Wahhabi Islam focused on the lesser *jihad* (without boundaries), which was now in conflict with the State's international agreements (with borders). The rapid conquest of large amounts of new territory resulted in major administrative challenges for the new state. As a result, in the Hejaz, Ibn Saud left many of the Hashemite administrators in place as well as the infrastructure for administering the new state—tax collection, administration, telephone, telegraph, vehicles, etc. This was an affront to many of the Ikhwan who honestly but simplistically believed that all these innovations were contrary to the practice of a pure Islamic state.[92]

On the first *Id al-Fitr* (the feast following Ramadan) in Mecca after the Saudi victory, one of the Ikhwan leaders made a thinly veiled threat stating that no one, not even rulers, were exempt from the strictures of what the Ikhwan viewed as the true faith. The Ikhwan were upset with Ibn Saud who

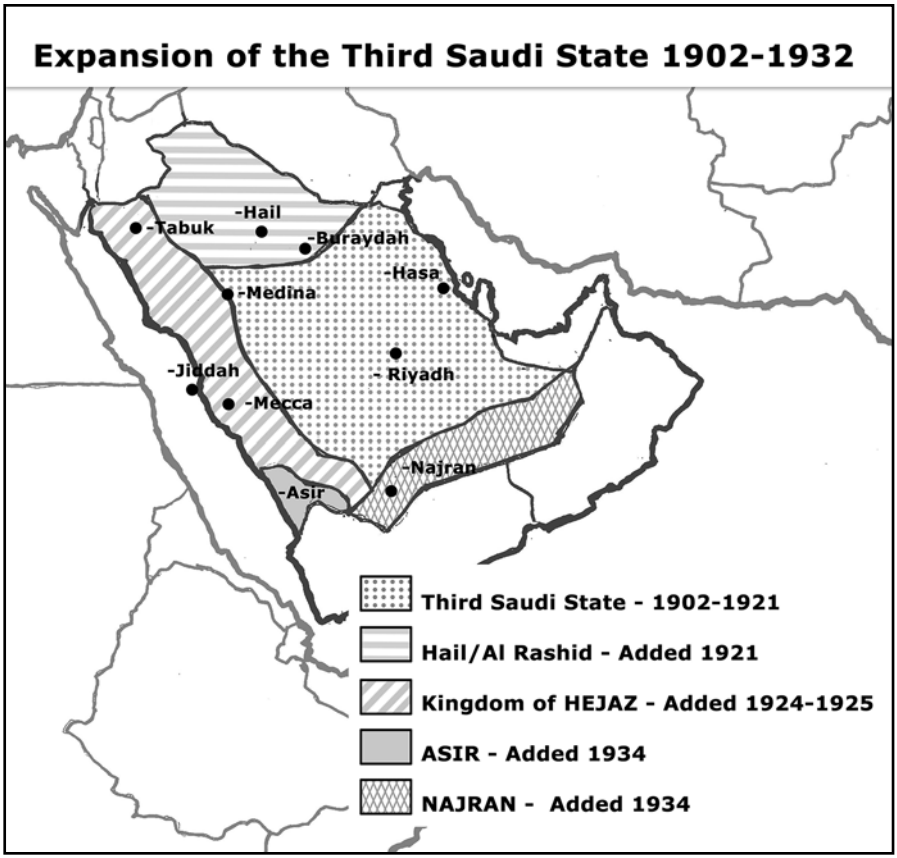

Figure 6. Map of the Third Saudi State. Source: U.S. Special Operations Command Graphics.

took the title 'King of the Hejaz' and who worked with 'infidels' more than was necessary.[93] Perhaps more importantly, the new political system was hurting the income from raiding. The Ikhwan vehemently disagreed with the raiding boycott of Kuwait arguing that if Kuwait were a Muslim country, then it should not be boycotted and if it were not, it should be raided. In 1927, Ibn Saud attempted to defuse the situation at a conference in the Nejd through gifts and rulings from the *ulema* on the correctness of his current policies. He only thought that he had defused the situation.[94] He had not. The Ikhwan were unable to grasp the magnitude of the problem that they were creating and likely did not care. Their frustration and raiding would lead to their downfall.[95]

In 1929, the Ikhwan attacked Wahhabi Muslims within the Saudi state, massacring merchants and herdsmen in a senseless bloodbath. Sheikh ibn Humaid, an Ikhwan leader, attacked another Ikhwan tribal village on the Iraqi border and slaughtered its inhabitants, apparently out of frustration.[96] The large tribes of the Nejd were outraged and flocked to Ibn Saud's support. The rebellion lasted through 1930 but the rebels were thoroughly defeated. Because many of the Ikhwan were from the northern part of Saudi Arabia, a large number surrendered to the Iraqis whom they had previously called infidels. This sparked a crisis with Iraq until the British arranged for their return as prisoners to Saudi Arabia.[97] The expansionist period had ended and with the Ikhwan under control, Ibn Saud moved to create a more modern state.

The Ikhwan were upset with Ibn Saud who took the title 'King of the Hejaz' and who worked with 'infidels' more than was necessary.

Saudi Arabia 1932-1953

On 22 September 1932, Ibn Saud formally declared the formation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. But having created the state, he lacked the financial resources to hold it together. The depression had deprived the monarch of much of his revenue from pilgrims on the Haj. His financial situation was so desperate that the American consul in Jidda argued that the state would eventually collapse and retreat back to the Nejd. Ibn Saud needed the financial capability to hold the state together. It was a patronage society and patronage required funds. St. John Philby, the famous British expert on Arabia and friend and confidant of Ibn Saud, related the story that while returning from a hunting trip, the King remarked that his financial situation was so desperate that he had to make a deal on oil exploration. Philby told him that he knew just the American to contact. In 1931, Charles R. Crane, who had been in Yemen building roads and ports, met with the king in Jidda. Crane agreed to send Karl S. Twitchell, one of his engineers, to survey the Kingdom. Twitchell surveyed for four American oil companies among which was Standard Oil of California (SOCAL).[98] Twitchell found geologic formations in the Dhahran area that looked promising for oil.[99] In 1933, a contract was signed with SOCAL to explore for oil in return for payments and loans that would keep the state afloat. This contract was bitterly opposed by many

clerics who saw the entrance of infidels into the country as an affront to Islam. In 1938, SOCAL struck oil near Dammam and the potential solution for Saudi Arabia's lack of funds had arrived.[100]

However, with the start of World War II, oil shipments came to a halt. Through the war years, Saudi Arabia survived on U.S. government aid and loans from the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO). When the war ended, Saudi revenues from oil escalated from $10 million in 1946 to $212 million in 1952, the last full year of Ibn Saud's reign. With no system in place for controlling or allocating funds for a budget, the Kingdom continued to skid along on the edge of bankruptcy.[101] The Saudi state simply lacked the institutions to control and allocate the wealth.

After the Second World War, the British created a system where Iraq and Transjordan were given their independence in return for basing rights and a

Figure 7. President Franklin Roosevelt meets with Saudi Arabian King Ibn Saud, 14 February 1945. At left are Admiral William Leahy and Colonel W.A. Eddy aboard the USS Quincy on Great Bitter Lake in the Suez Canal. Photo used by permission of Newscom.

preference for British oil companies. The now independent Hashemite states began plotting the creation of a super-Arab state based on several concepts including that of Greater Syria. Having good reason not to trust the British or Hashemites, these developments caused great concern in Riyadh. For this reason, Ibn Saud pursued an alliance with the United States as a counterweight to potential British and Hashemite threats. The British creation in Jordan of a modern well-equipped army, the Arab Legion, was of particular concern. By 1951, Saudi Arabia had made progress, although not as much as Ibn Saud wanted, toward obtaining a military and security relationship with the United States. Saudi-British relations further deteriorated over a dispute at the Buraimi Oasis located on the current border between Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In June 1951, the Kingdom concluded a series of agreements with the U.S. that included military and development aid and U.S. support for the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia. When Ibn Saud died in 1953, he bequeathed a unified state with potentially enormous resources to his sons Saud and Feisal, but he also handed them an ongoing crisis with the British over the Buraimi Oasis and the need to solidify the security relationship with the United States.

Summary

The reign of Ibn Saud provides an interesting study in how the right leader at the right time is absolutely critical to the success or failure of a political enterprise. For all the problems that Saudi Arabia would face, Ibn Saud attempted to impress upon those that succeeded him the importance of family unity. From 1910 to 1930 in the struggle to survive and maintain control, Ibn Saud conducted countless political maneuvers and military campaigns with grim determination. His good fortune and perhaps, most of all, his uncommon ability to analyze complex situations and understand the opportunities and the limitations inherent in them allowed him to succeed. This is something that neither of the previous Saudi states' leaders had managed to accomplish. In compromising with the British on multiple occasions, Ibn Saud demonstrated that he understood the error of the First Saudi State, namely overreaching in the face of power that was capable of the destroying the Kingdom. In believing that he could never trust the British and seeking a counterbalance to their influence, he demonstrated a rare capacity to formulate a workable policy to deal with it.

Ibn Saud politically and militarily outmaneuvered the Hashemites, diplomatically handled the British, and also gained control of his potent allies, the Ikhwan. Ibn Saud understood the importance of Wahhabi Islam as the ideological support for his rule and understood that the more extremist Ikhwan views constituted both a direct and indirect threat to a Saudi state. Ikhwan's lack of understanding of twentieth century political realities and their raids into neighboring British allied states and territories threatened to bring the very type of intervention that destroyed the First Saudi State. Ibn Saud executed what must have been an excruciating policy of attempting to compromise while waiting on the volatile Ikhwan to make a mistake. The Ikhwan accommodated the king with a monumental mistake of attacking other Wahhabis allowing him to rally support and destroy their power.

Ibn Saud also recognized that for Saudi Arabia to survive, he had to take some calculated risks. He needed a counterbalance to British hegemony in the region and the perceived threats posed by their Hashemite clients. He also needed a stream of revenue to hold the nation together. A state requires funds to maintain control. His gamble with the American oil companies and eventually the U.S. government would prove to be an incredibly farsighted maneuver. The oil would provide the necessary revenue stream. For all of its vexing issues on both sides, the U.S.–Saudi political relationship would become the bedrock of Middle East security in the twenty-first century.

King Abd-al-Aziz ibn Abd-al-Rahman al-Saud's reign marks the transition of the Saudi idea of a state from the tribal chieftain-based formula buttressed by the ideological glue of Wahhabi Islam to that of a national-state, based on patronage. That is the real contribution of Ibn Saud. He provided the Arabian Peninsula with more political stability than it had seen since the time of the Prophet. He also created an environment that retained its attributes of patronage and even patriarchy, but one that would also produce institutions that were adapted to the local environment. With the death of Ibn Saud in 1953, the pressing problems of the state fell to the new King Saud and his half-brother Crown Prince Feisal.

3. Transition and Crisis: 1953-1975

Twenty years after its formation, the Saudi state faced serious crisis. Ibn Saud died in 1953 and, pursuant to his wishes the crown passed to Saud ibn Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud (r. 1953-1964), the senior son. Saud had difficulty ruling the state because of health issues and his tribal chieftain leadership style was not appropriate for a modern head of state. Financially, despite the huge increases in oil revenue, the state was essentially bankrupt. It lacked even a rudimentary banking system much less budgetary controls and processes. When World War II ended, the Kingdom faced problems with the British in regard to London's preference for the Hashemites as well as the issue of revolutionary Egypt and the rise of its charismatic leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser. Having overthrown the Egyptian monarchy and outmaneuvered his political rivals, Nasser was intent on ridding the region of "feudalism" as he referred to the monarchies and establishing a Pan-Arab republic.

Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, viewed the region through a colonial perspective. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in discussing the Middle East with Churchill in early 1953, was discomfited by Churchill's approach. He feared that Churchill was "trying to relive the days of World War II … sitting on some rather Olympian platform with respect to the rest of world, and directing world affairs" with another American president. The president wrote in his diary:

> "Winston does not by any means propose to resort to power politics and to disregard legitimate aspirations among weaker peoples. But he does take the rather old-fashioned, paternalistic, approach that since we, with our experience and power, will be required to support and carry the heavy burdens of decent international plans, as well as to aid infant nations towards self-dependence, other nations should recognize the wisdom of our suggestions, and follow them."

Eisenhower believed that only "persuasion and example," "patient negotiation, understanding and equality of treatment," and not a "take it or leave it" approach would be successful. Washington wanted British cooperation but not the baggage of British colonialism, particularly in the Middle East.[102]

The Challenge of the 1950s and the Alliance with the United States

Ibn Saud allied himself with the United States in the 1930s for two primary reasons. First, the American oil companies offered terms on oil exploration and production that were far superior to anything that could be expected from the British. Second, Ibn Saud understood that World War I had shown the weaknesses of the British and that the United States was the new global power and might be a useful counterbalance to London. By the end of World War II, the Americans and the Soviets had emerged as post-war superpowers. By making a deal with the American oil companies, Ibn Saud believed that he was making a deal with the U.S. government because that was way the British model worked. In the British model, oil and government policy were virtually indistinguishable.

For nearly two centuries, the Saudi states had contested issues with local rulers who were backed by the British. The disputes are too numerous to list here. The greatest symbol of this problem in the early 1950s was the Buraimi Oasis on the border of present day Oman and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E). Tribes in the border regions paid *zakat—sharia* based taxes to various Saudi emirs. Based on this and other tribal agreements, the Saudis claimed large areas of what is now the U.A.E. and Oman. Populations were sparse but there was potential for oil. Saudi Arabia and ARAMCO supported the local rulers that favored Riyadh. Drawing parallels from the relationship between the British government and British oil companies, the Saudis concluded that the U.S. government would backup ARAMCO and therefore Saudi claims against the British clients on the Trucial Coast.

In August 1952, Saudi Arabia occupied the Buraimi Oasis citing their former control during the First and Second Saudi States of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The British called it a "blitzkrieg" when a column of ARAMCO-supplied Dodge command cars arrived and "before anyone knew what was happening, the leader, a man named Turki bin Abdullah bin Ataishan, announced to the astonished people that he was their governor."[103] To quote a member of one of the tribes whose father and grandfather had supported the Saudis: "The Saudis were very smart and had most of the tribes of the area on their side before either the British, the Sultan in Muscat or the Emir in Abu Dhabi knew what had happened."[104] Turki bin Abdullah bin Ataishan, the Saudi point man at Buraimi, was both competent and energetic

to the point that the British refused to hold a plebiscite because it would likely "confirm a situation which the Saudis had falsely and improperly created."[105] In short, the tribes would have voted for the Saudis.

The Saudis acted in part because they believed that ARAMCO had the backing of the U.S. government.[106] The unusually cautious reaction by the British seemed to indicate that they thought the same thing.[107] The British were hardly defending the rights of the weak. A British assessment at the time stated that London's "basic interest…[arose] from the possibility of oil exploitation." After the British, under strong U.S. pressure, imposed the Standstill Agreement that committed all sides to desist from offensive operations in their current positions, Omani Sultan Sa'id bin Taymur, who had rallied loyal tribes and been prepared to fight, now refused "to take positive steps to assert his authority."[108] London had once again intervened in such a way that it protected its broader interests but undermined the authority of those it was ostensibly representing.

With the Saudis occupying Buraimi and rumors of new aggressive moves on the part of Saudi sympathizers and ARAMCO, British oil companies pressed the British government to do something.[109] In Oman, on 4 May 1954, Ghalib bin 'Ali Al-Hinai (1912-2009) was elected Imam and key tribes under new sheikhs began to shift their allegiance from the Sultanate to the new Imam. Loyal shiekhs were forced to flee to British protection in Sharjah.[110] At this point, the new Imam declared the Imamate independent and applied for membership in the Arab League. Both the Saudis and the Egyptians saw this as the perfect opportunity to undermine the British and support the Imam.[111] The Imam also submitted the question of "British Acts of Aggression" to the Arab League with the Saudis and Egyptians supporting "assistance" to the Imam.[112] Alarmed, the British concluded that they had to expeditiously deal with the situation at Buraimi.

British officials discussed making a deal with Riyadh. The Foreign Office rejected the suggestion noting that it could "prejudice" good relations with Abu Dhabi and Muscat and adding, "Politically also it is better not to seem to hold a pistol at ARAMCO's head. We have to think of good relations with the American Oil Companies and the United States Government, particularly in the present context of Persia."[113] The British realized the Imam Ghalib's efforts with the Arab League, supported by the Saudis and Egyptians, might yet reap something approaching international recognition for the Imamate

and unravel the British position in the Gulf so they agreed to an arbitration conference set for September 1955 in Geneva.

The arbitration commission began to evaluate the Saudi's Buraimi claim. Almost immediately, the Saudi representative began to lobby fellow commission members and offer monetary inducements for support. The British delegate, Sir Reader Bullard, resigned and the commission dissolved. On 26 October, using the Trucial Oman Levies (TOL) recruited locally and officered by the British, the TOL overpowered the Saudi outpost at Buraimi and besieged their local allies at Hamsa.[114] The next morning the TOL commanders reported that resistance had ceased.[115]

Prime Minister Anthony Eden told the British Parliament that "hopes" for an arbitrated settlement had been "disappointed" due to Saudi "bribery and intimidation on a wide scale." As a result, the British government acted "to exercise its duty, which is to protect the legitimate interests of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and the Sultan of Muscat" by restoring "their previous control of the Buraimi Oasis."[116] Saudi Arabia called for a meeting of the United Nations' Security Council and informed the British Embassy in Jidda, "The Saudi Arabian Government do [sic] not consider that there is any difference between them and the Sultan of Muscat and Sheikh Abu Dhabi, but the difference is between them and the British Government who have imposed their will upon these rulers in order to achieve their own private aims." The Saudis made it clear that they did not accept the British position on the location of the borders in the area.[117]

The Buraimi dispute was an important policy issue. There were potential compromises to be reached but the British under Churchill (and later Eden) fully intended to maintain an "informal empire" in the Middle East; Saudi Arabia's ambitions and their U.S. ally were potential impediments to this goal—Middle East oil produced through British controlled companies subsidized the entire British financial system.[118] During this time, Washington's priorities were in other areas. The first U.S. priority was in Iran with the threat of a leftist or neutralist takeover. The second priority was to establish a Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) to contain the Soviet Union. Revolutionary Egypt was the key and Eisenhower and Dulles believed that the removal of 70,000 British troops from the Suez Canal Zone was critical to Egyptian cooperation. Both priorities required British cooperation. Advocating Ibn Saud and ARAMCO's territorial claims on the Arabian Peninsula would take a backseat.[119]

The U.S. continued to view the Gulf as a British sphere of interest. This did not mean the U.S. administration would not take exception to the British ignoring U.S. interests at Buraimi, but just that other issues related to NATO and European economic cooperation were higher priority. From Washington's perspective, Buraimi was a regrettable setback but a relatively minor one. For Riyadh, it was an object lesson in dealing with the United States. In comparison to British decision-making, U.S. policy decisions appeared ambiguous with regard to its 'Arab allies' and its own oil companies. The U.S. government did not necessarily stand up for the interests of its oil companies even when the Secretary of State had worked with them in the private sector. Despite their disappointment, Saudi Arabia now concluded their security interests were tied directly to their relationship with Washington and focused on raising the importance of the relationship to that of the primary relationship in the Arab world and the Gulf as well.

The Kingdom versus Nasser and Pan-Arab Ideology

While Saudi Arabia needed the United States as an ally, the Kingdom still had its proprietary interests and needed to pursue those interests, no matter what the U.S. position. In the 80-year history of U.S.-Saudi relations, 1955 to 1963 is perhaps the most interesting and instructive. The Saudis struggled with Nasserism, succession problems, and that at times the U.S. would either misapprehend or ignore the Kingdom's interests—insights for the contemporary period as well. In the 1950s, Nasser's calls for an end to "feudal regimes" and pan-Arab unification were popular even in conservative Saudi Arabia. Saud was simply incapable of formulating a political strategy to reform the Kingdom and, at the same time, defend it from Nasser and his political message. At times, Nasser appeared to be more popular in Saudi Arabia than King Saud. In the West, particularly in the U.S. foreign policy establishment, Nasser was viewed as the wave of the future. After the collapse of the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq, there was considerable talk about creating a "soft landing" for Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The U.S. government underestimated the resiliency of both.

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In 1957, Washington wanted the Kingdom to become a bulwark against Nasserist expansion in the region, but following the U.S. lead was potentially a risk as Buraimi had demonstrated. King Saud wanted some concrete reassurance of U.S. backing. The assurance came in the form of an Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai, which had been captured in 1956. Saud called on the United States to pressure the Israelis to withdraw arguing that it was the effective way to blunt Nasser's propaganda. Eisenhower was already in the process of pressuring the Israelis. Thus, when the withdrawal occurred, both Nasser and Saud claimed the credit. It doubly inflated Nasser's reputation. When Saud attempted to assert a stronger position in the Arab world, Nasser capitalized on Saud's missteps. The result was a sequence of events that ultimately resulted in Saud's removal as king.[120] By 1958, Nasser had become the darling of the global Non-Aligned Movement in the Arab world and the patron saint of Pan-Arab unification.

A 1958 crisis in Syria directly affected Saudi Arabia. The Syrians, fearing a civil war, called for unification with Egypt. The move sent shock waves through the Arab Middle East and beyond. In the street, calls for unification were wildly popular, albeit an improbable concept, but Arab rulers simply could not ignore it. The pro-western Arab states welcomed unification while at the same time looked for ways to oppose Nasser's ambitions. The reaction in Washington was ambivalence, and this only increased Arab concerns about U.S. intentions. The Eisenhower administration was pessimistic about the situation.

> "While these four countries (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon) may privately oppose (the) union, it is doubtful whether they will be able to adopt any common line of action…to constitute effective opposition to the union.…Jordan's efforts to interest Iraq and Saudi Arabia in a closer association of the three Kings to which Lebanon could adhere have so far fallen on barren ground. However, in order to be ready in the unlikely event that the four Arab states come up with a common position of opposition, which is feasible and acceptable to us, we are giving urgent consideration to appropriate ways in which we could assist those states in the implementation of their common action."[121]

The British were concerned that Riyadh and Washington might actually buy into Nasser's anti-Communist rhetoric: "The line that Nasser is saving

Syria from Communism will doubtless be pushed hard with King Saud [ibn Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud], as well as with the Americans."[122]

In Saudi Arabia, King Saud's initial reaction was to oppose the union, but how?[123] Saud decided to initiate a high-risk operation. Saud officials concluded that Lieutenant Colonel Abd-al-Hamid al-Sarraj would agree to assassinate Nasser if the payment were large enough. Sarraj was the commander of the Syrian intelligence and security organization and had the means and the access to accomplish the mission. When approached, Sarraj accepted the assignment and several million dollars in funds. He then reported the Saudi scheme and embarrassed King Saud.[124] Press and radio attacks from Cairo on the King sparked pro-Nasser unrest in the Kingdom. Embarrassed and facing external and internal Nasserist pressure, Saudi Arabia pulled back from any participation with those supporting a rival union. It also had a pronounced effect internally.[125]

In Saudi Arabia, frictions increased between Crown Prince Feisal and the King. The lack of a disciplined approach to the budget and spending meant that the Kingdom was chronically short of funds. King Saud approached rule from a traditional point of view as a tribal leader. Feisal understood that to run a modern state, finances and administration required rationalization, discipline, and control. The Sarraj incident provided him with the leverage to institute reforms. Feisal and his allies forced King Saud to step back from everyday government operations. He gave up the positions of defense, foreign affairs, and finance. After taking the reins, Feisal moved to an accommodation with Nasser to quell domestic pressure while he attempted to "clean up the Augean stables of Saudi finances."[126]

The Nasserist surge created concern about Saudi Arabia's future because it lacked the necessary institutional infrastructure to support a modern state. Foreign Policy analysts pointed out:

> "Whatever his sympathies Saud cannot afford to ignore Nasser's appeal to his impoverished subjects. Every Saudi Arabian village has radios tuned to Cairo's broadcasts. Egyptian technicians and teachers have deeply infiltrated the kingdom. For all his oil riches, Saud's financial position is so bad that world banks ceased several months ago to honor Saudi letters of credit. Educated Saudis almost to a man are disgusted. 'The King is burning up our wealth wasting, wasting everywhere. It…cannot go on'. There were real concerns that

> the monarchy itself was at risk but the emerging middle and educated classes viewed Nasser as the 'only Arab leader worth following'."[127]

Feisal pursued a sophisticated policy reminiscent of Ibn Saud's policies. The Kingdom more or less followed Nasser's lead in non-Arab affairs while obfuscating and avoiding confrontations on Arab matters. Feisal embraced "positive neutrality" but in Arab and regional affairs, he promised cooperation with both Nasser's United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) and its opposition Iraqi-Jordanian Arab Union.[128] The policy was designed to buy time so that Feisal could get the situation under control. To further broaden support, Feisal stated that with conditions, he would be willing to reestablish relations with Britain and France. Those relations had been broken off as a result of the Suez conflict and ongoing Saudi-British disputes over boundaries with the Gulf emirates.

Placating Nasser, Feisal also criticized the United States for demanding free passage of Israeli ships into the Gulf of Aqaba. He called it, "aggression against Egypt" and a breach of international law. However, when the Egyptians demanded that Saudi Arabia rescind U.S. basing rights at Dhahran, Feisal told them that American "transit rights" were a separate matter and the agreement would stand.[129] In September 1959, Feisal endorsed King Saud's anti-Communist summit in Riyadh that included both Nasser and King Hussein of Jordan.[130] The anti-Communist issue was straightforward; Feisal sincerely sided with Nasser in his anti-Communist campaign in Egypt, Syria, and against Iraq.[131] On other issues like Arab unity under Egyptian leadership, the strategic goal remained to buy time.

The Saud – Feisal Conflict

The problems and changes in Riyadh raised serious concerns in Washington. The Eisenhower administration had hoped that King Saud could create a pro-western counterbalance to Cairo. The changes and the apparent new policy direction of Feisal were disturbing; the apparent instability in Riyadh was alarming.[132] President Eisenhower met with Secretary of the Treasury, Robert B. Anderson, and raised the possibility of a declaration that NATO and the U.S. "would not tolerate the prospect of the loss of Middle Eastern oil to the West." Dulles lamented that instability in Riyadh made the Iraqi and Jordanian regimes even less stable. He added, "It was plain that Nasser had caught the imagination of the masses throughout the entire area."[133]

At the 13 March 1958 National Security Council (NSC) meeting the discussions about Saudi Arabia were gloomy—speculation about a collapse in Riyadh and a formal Saudi alliance with Cairo. Eisenhower even raised the possibility of invoking the Eisenhower Doctrine and intervening directly to counter the 10,000 Egyptians currently living in the Kingdom. He admitted that it looked like an internal Saudi matter but quickly added, "Even so, we simply could not stand around and do nothing and see the whole area fall into the hands of Communism."[134] Misunderstanding the situation, the U.S. President expressed his concern about Saud's replacement by his "pro-Nasserist" brother, Feisal. The White House failed to grasp that it was the ambivalence of U.S. policy and the pursuit of a rapprochement with Nasser that made Feisal leery of depending on U.S. support.

Feisal, a realist, understood that reforms had to be made in Saudi Arabia if the kingdom were to survive.[135] In rectifying the budget, Feisal refused to recognize the debts incurred by Saud. King Saud sought political allies, but by this time, most of the senior princes had aligned against him. In desperation, he embraced a discontented group of young princes and Talal ibn Abd-al-Aziz, the leader of the "Nejd al-Fattah," or "Young Nejd." Ironically, the "Young Nejd" was originally formed to oppose Saud himself. In December 1960, Saud regained control of the Council of Ministers with reformist support. On 25 December, Radio Riyadh announced that a new constitution for Saudi Arabia would be written and that other liberalizing reforms would follow. On 29 December, King Saud again in control ordered Radio Riyadh to announce that there would be no new constitution. The political conflict included the reformers attacking the King, the King struggling with the Crown Prince, and the Crown Prince attempting to rationalize and reform government operations opposed by both the King and the reformers. The leadership situation appeared increasingly unstable, promoting rising concern in Washington.[136] The nightmare of the family struggle that destroyed the Second Saudi State appeared to be repeating itself.

Had Nasser mounted a serious attempt to topple the Saudi government at this point, it might have succeeded. But, the window was brief and occurred simultaneously with Nasser's other problems in Syria and with Abd-al-Karim al-Qasim, the military ruler of Iraq. Qasim's destruction of Hashemite Iraq in 1958 created more problems for Nasser than for the Saudis. In April 1959, a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) for Saudi Arabia confirmed the success of Feisal's policies. It stated:

> "The 1958 Iraqi revolt and its aftermath, including fears of increased Communist influence, have diverted the interest of Arab Nationalists in general and of Nasser in particular, away from the traditional states .... As a result, Feisal has been able to devote much of his time and effort to internal matters."

The report went on to say that Feisal had stabilized the currency, established the "first real national budget," and managed modest improvements in the administration.[137] In the case of Feisal, competence, discipline, and good timing coalesced. In addition, other members of the royal family, including some that had stayed on the sidelines in the Saud-Feisal dispute, recognized that Feisal had to retake control. Washington had also come to the realization that Feisal was the best chance that the Kingdom had to reform and survive the wave of radical Arab nationalism.[138]

Feisal pursued his own interests and walked the tightrope between Nasser and the West. Washington took an ambiguous position of recognizing Nasser but not recognizing his role in the larger Arab world, a distinction lost on many in the region. The Egyptian leader also told other Arab leaders that he was now working with the Americans and that he was their chosen instrument in the region. He used this tactic to inflate his own importance and to confuse pro-western states about U.S. policy and intentions. Until the situation clarified, it was a far more prudent policy for the Kingdom to attempt to maintain its U.S. ties and placate Nasser because all appearances indicated that Nasser might indeed be a U.S. ally.

The Rise of King Feisal

Between 1958 and 1964, as the royal family searched for and eventually found a formula for stability and reform, Feisal and his allies faced other severe challenges as well. Their political restructuring allowed the Kingdom to move beyond the crisis of succession politics into a more stable political, economic, and even societal posture. Crown Prince Feisal ibn Abd-al-Aziz, supported by the current King of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah bin Abd-al-Aziz; Khalid bin Abd-al-Aziz, king from 1975 to 1982, whose connections to the al-Jiluwi branch of the family was important; and by another group of seven full brothers known as the Sudairi Seven or the al-Fahd after Fahd ibn Abd-al-Aziz, the eldest of the seven brothers, basically created the modern Saudi state.[139]

The most interesting issue arising out of this struggle between Saud and Feisal was the U.S. failure to grasp the overriding lesson from these events. The predisposition of the United States to view monarchy as an anachronism and republics as more progressive created problems in the relationship with the Kingdom.[140] King Feisal and his allies demonstrated the resiliency of well-led traditional Arab governments. They reformed Saudi Arabia's institutions, fought off Nasserist pan-Arabism and the threat of Iraqi Ba'thism, and found a consensus that allowed the Kingdom to make a very difficult transition. They pursued Saudi interests even when it ran counter to immediate U.S. policy. More importantly, Saudi Arabia's pursuit of its own interests would, in fact, serve Washington's strategic interests better in the long-run than the preconceived policies *de jour* of many in the U.S. foreign policy establishment.

The first significant test in this regard would be the situation in Yemen. Yemen was not then, nor has it ever been, a stable national state. The northern part of the country was in part controlled by the Imamate in Sana'a and in part by various tribes and tribal confederations. The south consisted of the British Crown Colony of Aden and a confederation of tribal leaders lumped together in a protectorate, and later a confederation. The Imamate was virtually a medieval institution controlled in a vacillating equilibrium between the tribes and the Imam. Nevertheless, in 1955, in the aftermath of a coup attempt, Imam Ahmad al-Muttawakkil instituted reforms and entered an alliance with Nasser. The reforms brought a focus on education and infrastructure that brought in foreigners including large numbers of Egyptians. The alliance with Nasser was directed at the British in Aden. Ideologically, Nasser wanted to see the British removed from Arab lands; despite his only partial hold on the north, Imam Ahmed had long coveted south Yemen and Aden. Politically and ideologically, it was an odd-couple, but their interests coincided. The alliance meant that the Imam received Soviet military hardware and large numbers of Egyptian officers and technicians to train the Yemeni army. Also key officers were sent to the Soviet Union and Egypt for training.

In 1962, Imam Ahmad died and his son (Badr), who had been acting as regent for several years, became Imam. Imam Badr lasted a week. On 26 September 1962, army units overthrew the Imamate but failed to kill or capture Badr, who fled to the north to raise tribal resistance to the new Egyptian-backed Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) government. The coup shifted

the dynamic in the region. The British were alarmed and determined to undermine Egyptian efforts in Yemen.[141] The Jordanians, under constant threat from Cairo, joined in with the British. Most importantly, Saudi Arabia had no desire to see a Nasserist state on its southern border.

The collapse of the imamate caught the Saudis by surprise. King Saud was ill and Crown Prince Feisal was in the United States attending the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. The history of Saudi conflict with the Imamate no longer mattered. The destruction of a monarchy that put Nasser's Soviet-equipped army next door was unnerving. Feisal demanded unequivocal U.S. security guarantees. The Kennedy administration offered vague assurances because they did not want to upset Nasser.[142] As Robert "Blow-torch Bob" Komer, Kennedy's National Security Council (NSC) Middle East specialist stated, "Unfortunately, the Yemen revolt has brought to a boil all Saudi fears of Nasserism (the house of Saud well knows it might be next)." Radio Cairo broadcast the same thing, which did not help assuage Saudi concerns. U.S. advice was less than reassuring stating, "Deliberate, controlled internal reform is the best antidote to Nasserism."[143]

When Feisal asked Kennedy to use his influence with Nasser to prevent subversive Egyptian activities, the President responded that despite its aid programs, he lacked that kind of influence with the Egyptian leader.[144] The Crown Prince then criticized the shortsighted American "belief that Nasser is the natural and inevitable leader" and complained that Nasser appeared to be the "chosen U.S. instrument" in the region. Feisal warned Kennedy that he was making a serious mistake.[145]

During their 5 October 1962 meeting, Feisal informed Kennedy that he, not King Saud, would be handling the affairs of government, the first outward indication that the power struggle in the Kingdom had ended with Feisal in charge.[146] Although there were obviously other factors, the Yemen coup had settled the issue. The stress of the situation brought King Saud, who was already ill, to the point of physical and mental collapse. On 17 October, Saud gave Crown Prince Feisal unfettered authority.[147] In effect, although not immediately apparent, the Yemen coup and Egyptian threat was the catalyst that stabilized the situation in Saudi Arabia. It permanently removed King Saud from power and discredited Prince Talal and his "Free Princes" movement with its pro-Nasserist sentiments.[148] Predictably, Radio Cairo called it a desperate move to shore up a collapsing regime.[149] Feisal

announced plans to accelerate reform while pressuring the U.S. about the threat posed by Nasser.[150]

The State Department, including the Embassy in Jidda, called for the recognition of the YAR and believed that the new regime would steer a neutralist course. At the same time, the State Department hoped that "an independent YAR, no longer under pressure to accept UAR [United Arab Republic] military help for survival" would cease to be a threat to Saudi Arabia and might reverse the "unacknowledged but universally known" Saudi interference in Yemeni affairs. Ambassador Hart in Jidda told Washington that Feisal, a "progressive reformer" would "welcome" just such a policy because it removed "the threat from the north" and acted to inhibit Soviet inroads in Sana'a.[151] Obviously Hart's analysis of Feisal's reaction was wrong.

... Feisal informed Kennedy that he ... would be handling the affairs of government, the first outward indication that the power struggle in the Kingdom had ended with Feisal in charge.

In fact, the "neutral" YAR and their Egyptian allies were lobbying for U.S. recognition while they planned airstrikes against tribal resistance. Claiming a "Saudi invasion," YAR representatives stated that they would be justified in retaking Najran and Asir and attacking airfields at Jidda, Riyadh, and Jizan.[152] Wasting no time, the Egyptians began to bomb villages in southern Saudi Arabia. The U.S. informed Cairo and Sana'a, "USG is morally committed to support maintenance of integrity of reformist Feisal regime and cannot stand idly by in the face of such attacks."[153] Feisal demanded additional U.S. military assistance and broke diplomatic relations with Cairo.[154]

Inexplicably, the State Department decided that YAR recognition would prevent a further escalation of the conflict, limit UAR influence, undermine Soviet influence and protect Saudi Arabia and Jordan from an internal revolt. Thus, despite the UAR air raids on Saudi border areas, Secretary of State Dean Rusk recommended to Kennedy that the United States recognize the new republican government in Sana'a. At the same time, it reassured Feisal and initiated "Operation Hard Surface," the dispatch of U.S. combat aircraft to Dhahran in an effort to bring Riyadh and Cairo to a negotiated solution.[155] Somewhat dumbfounded by the U.S. position, British Prime Minister Macmillan suggested that Kennedy needed to obtain something concrete in exchange for recognition:

> "I therefore feel that you should get something more than words before you give recognition and money. I quite recognize that the loyalists will probably not win in Yemen in the end but it would not suit us too badly if the new Yemeni regime were occupied with their own internal affairs during the next few years."

The Prime Minister pointed out that Yemeni President Sallal's public call for a revolt against the British in Aden made London's recognition impossible.[156]

Playing his own diplomatic game, Feisal informed Ambassador Hart that a series of reforms were underway including infrastructure improvements, the abolition of slavery, education for women and improved financial controls.[157] Fearing revolutionary instability in the Kingdom, the Kennedy administration continued to hedge in its support for Feisal, expecting a renewed power struggle with the reformist princes or with King Saud with an unforeseeable outcome. As Feisal became more secure, he flexed his diplomatic and economic muscle informing Washington that he was distressed that, "The U.S. considered relations with its sincere friends, like SAG [Saudi Arabian Government] as less important than helping Nasser." Feisal calculated correctly that fear of U.S. intervention would prevent a UAR invasion and, short of an invasion, he had the resources to undermine the UAR.[158] Feisal published a letter from the White House that assured "full United States support for the maintenance of Saudi Arabia's integrity."[159] From Nasser's point of view, there could be no mistaking that Feisal and the Kingdom had Washington's full support "come what may."[160]

Feisal had his security guarantee. While the pro-western states and Britain lectured the State Department on the folly of trusting Nasser and the YAR, Feisal merely warned the U.S. that formal relations with the YAR would "backfire against [the U.S.] in the region."[161] Trying to placate Feisal, Washington attempted to obtain YAR acknowledgement of the Sana'a Treaty of 1934, recognition of British rights in Aden, and recognition of the rights and status of the U.S. Agency for International Development mission in Taiz.[162] The YAR government flatly refused. The U.S. recognized the YAR anyway.

By 1967, Nasser's forces and those of the YAR government were on the defensive and caused a serious drain on resources and funds in Cairo. At this time, Israel launched a surprise attack on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and took the Sinai, Golan, and West Bank. While this was happening, the Egyptians

had their best combat units in Yemen. The defeat brought an evacuation of Egyptian forces from Yemen and Egyptian influence was eliminated almost overnight, leaving Saudi Arabia as the most influential foreign state in the region.

Even when Saudi Arabia strayed from U.S. policy positions, Feisal managed the relationship so that Washington continued to support the Kingdom on the larger, critical security issues. Internally, Feisal's steady hand during the early years of the Yemen conflict had convinced many he had the ability to run the ship of state. In November 1964, Saud was removed for 'reasons of health' and Feisal became monarch.[163] Behind an American shield, Feisal had undermined the archenemy of the Kingdom, Nasserist Egypt. He shrewdly used the relationship with the U.S. to his advantage. Saudi Arabia had emerged from the succession crisis with a solid security relationship with the United States. At the same time, Saudi leaders had learned an important lesson about dealing with the United States. U.S. policy often became fixated on issues other than pure interests. In the end, the Kingdom would have to rely on its own evaluation of its interests and not the well-intentioned but sometimes problematic advice of others.

King Feisal and the Emergence of an Economic Superpower

The period 1967 to 1973 marked a period of significant transition in Saudi Arabia and the region. While the Egyptian threat receded, new problems arose. The British withdrew from Aden and a new Marxist government emerged in the form of the Peoples' Republic of South Yemen. In addition to the withdrawal from Aden, the British announced that by 1970, they would withdraw all forces east of Suez, including those in the Gulf. This created a new, fluid situation in the Gulf and great uncertainty. Feisal feared that Iran and the increasingly aggressive posturing on the part of the Shah portended a move by Tehran to expand into the vacuum. Preoccupied with Vietnam and other issues, the United States seemed more than willing to support Iranian ambitions. When fighting in the Dhofar province of Oman escalated, Iranian troops were introduced onto the Arabian Peninsula to support the Sultanate, a strategy that was an anathema to Saudi policy.

During this period, Saudi Arabia began to grapple with the issue of U.S. priorities in the region. Saudi Arabia focused on raising its strategic importance with the U.S. as opposed to the U.S. propensity to focus on Iran as its

military and security partner in the region. Oil was a leverage the Kingdom could use as an instrument to shift the political and security dynamic from Iran to Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf.

In the early 1970s, considerable talk about the "oil weapon" was heard, particularly as it related to Israel and Zionist policies in the region. Half-hearted discussions and even attempts to use it in 1948, 1956, and 1967 all failed. The Kingdom attempted to cement several long-term oil agreements with the United States. Washington demurred, fearing domestic political fallout and that such a relationship would limit its options in the region. The U.S. government did not acknowledge a potential threat posed by the growing segment of the oil market controlled by Saudi Arabia. In 1973, Feisal warned the U.S. that its unequivocal, one-sided backing of Israel had created problems for himself and the U.S. in the region and that something had to change. Washington dismissed the warning assuming the Kingdom would bluster, but that actual action was unthinkable given their dependence on western security guarantees. The Nixon administration failed to grasp that western economic security and prosperity had grown dependent on Middle East oil.[164]

Feisal encouraged Egypt's President Sadat to expel the Soviet advisors and pursue his plans to attack Israeli positions in the Sinai. Feisal promised that if Israel received overt help from the U.S., then Saudi Arabia would cut off the oil and he delivered on that promise.[165] Feisal agreed that if the war turned into a lengthy one or if the West attempted to decisively alter the outcome by supporting Israel, Saudi Arabia would use the "oil weapon." When the U.S. resupply of Israel threatened to undermine early Arab gains, King Feisal initiated a gradual decrease in product for every month that Israel continued its occupation of lands gained in 1967. This was a test of the Saudi-U.S. relationship from Riyadh's point of view. Feisal had officially linked oil and politics. Washington continued to ignore Feisal's warning.[166]

Feisal announced a full embargo of oil for the United States. The ensuing panic brought soaring prices and long gas lines. The embargo brought changes in European and Asian policies calling on Israel to respect international law and the call to return to its 1967 borders. The embargo and the subsequent price rises had a marginal effect on the political situation in the Middle East in general, but it had a significant effect on U.S.-Saudi relations. Saudi interests could no longer be ignored and the relationship could not be taken for granted. By 1975, Henry Kissinger had significantly altered the tone

of American policy promising the commitment to Israel's survival and stating clearly that Arab interests could not be ignored.[167] Feisal would not live to hear those statements, but his policies brought American realization that the Kingdom was critical to the security and economic stability of the West. The embargo also had the somewhat unexpected effect of permanently raising the price of oil and shifting it to a market driven paradigm. This would ensure the massive stream of revenue required to modernize the Kingdom and its infrastructure.

Feisal had outlasted and triumphed over Nasser in Yemen and lived to see his Egyptian nemesis humbled in the Six Day War and forced to ask for Saudi aid. He had maneuvered the state around demands for a constitutional monarchy and survived the instability of a lengthy and contentious succession. From this, he had forged a stable power structure that would serve the Kingdom for more than 30 years. He also created a new respect in Washington for Saudi and Arab interests through the oil embargo and, at the same time, created the enormously increased revenue stream. At the height of his power, Feisal was assassinated by a disaffected family member with a history of personal problems.

The assassination shocked not only the royal family but also the country as a whole. It heightened the debates over western influence and the problems of newfound wealth in the very conservative Islamic society, but also proved the resilience of the political system. The transition from Feisal to Khalid bin Abd-al-Aziz was seamless—a marked difference from the political tensions and problems associated with the struggle between Saud and Feisal in the aftermath of Ibn Saud's death. Now a system existed and there was a political and social consensus that supported its legitimacy. In many respects, it also marked the end of a period of stabilization and the beginning of more assertive Saudi regional and foreign policy. Feisal and the oil embargo had served notice globally, but particularly in the United States that the Kingdom could not be taken for granted. Under the new King, Riyadh would move to expand on the foundation laid by Feisal.

Summary

The period of 1953-1975 is critical to understanding not only the Kingdom but also the economic and security issues and that have tied Saudi interests so closely to those of the West. During this period, Saudi Arabia

metamorphosed into a global economic power, one that would challenge, if reluctantly, the U.S. rather than be taken for granted. During this period, the U.S. failed to understand the Kingdom, its intentions, and its place in the regional context.

This chapter has touched on what Sir Charles Johnston, the former British diplomat and Colonial Office official, referred to as the Americans' "infantile anti-Monarchist prejudices to blind them to this fact. Monarchy is a very ancient and tenacious principle, in the Arab world.…It would be naïve to think that, after living with it for millennia; the Arab world is suddenly going to drop it [for republican dictatorships]."[168] Sir Charles also stated, "The American theory that an Arab Republic has something inherently more stable about it than an Arab monarchy seems to me to be more derived from ideology than fact." Johnston argued, "With all respect I think that the Americans' policy about Nasser is a menace both to our interests and their own."[169] Ideologically, the progressive heritage of the American foreign policy apparatus simply could not come to terms with the fact that monarchies in the Middle East overall were more stable than republics and that representative, good governance most often did not come from a ballot box or a dictator in uniform. It was simply hard to conceive of a traditional society and political system surviving the onslaught of "modern" political and social movements—like Nasserism.

The two previous Saudi states had failed to survive because of their inability to consolidate political power to control the state and its supporters. The first collapse was due to overreach and the second was due to an internal power struggle. Ibn Saud avoided the first mistake by gaining control of the Ikhwan and playing a sophisticated game of cat and mouse with his Arabian enemies and their outside supporters—the Ottomans and British. However, he had not solved the problem of succession. He had done the best that he could under the circumstances and made his preferences for Saud and Feisal known. He could not, however, have anticipated the problems that would arise almost simultaneously with his death—radical Arab nationalism, the reforms required to run a modern state, or the turmoil that the region would face.

Feisal understood his environment, his adversaries and, in the end, his allies. He understood that functions of government had to be rationalized and that institutions had to be created in order for the state to survive. He also understood that the reforms required would have to be done carefully

to avoid a major split in the family. Even in the removal of King Saud, Feisal waited for a consensus to form that it was absolutely necessary to prevent a split that would threaten the state. He understood from the beginning that Pan-Arab nationalism and Nasser were threats, but he skillfully avoided a confrontation until his position held at least the potential for success. He took advantage of what his adversaries gave—Nasser's critical preoccupation with Iraq and Syria gave the Kingdom breathing space for reform. Yemen provided him with the opportunity to undermine Nasser and turn what looked like an easy victory in Sana'a to an unmitigated disaster. And, finally, he solidified the relationship with the United States, and by the end of his reign he had served notice that ignoring the interests of Saudi Arabia, including the broader interests of the Arab World, could have very serious consequences.

The modern state constructed by Feisal has provided a political core around which the sons of Ibn Saud have exercised global political and economic power. There have been rocky periods, but few appreciate the Saudi accomplishment in overcoming the enormous challenges of the late 1950s. This period provides a window into how the Saudi monarchy coped with enormous regional instability and internal dissent during a period of major dynastic change, and it may provide clues to the future. As one senior Saudi prince put it when asked about the ability of the Kingdom to survive, "They said we were finished and that Nasser was the wave of the future – where is Nasserism now and where are we?"[170]

4. Modern Saudi Arabia and the Patronage State

By the time of King Feisal's death, a subtle but pronounced shift had occurred in Saudi Arabia's history—the Kingdom had attained a level of political and economic stability heretofore unrealized. This chapter examines the impact of this development on foreign and security policy and looks at the challenges associated with embracing modernity within a conservative traditional society and a patronage state. In a sense, these political, social and economic challenges faced each of the Saudi states since 1744. Ironically, stability and prosperity for the Kingdom resulted from the very forces of industrialization and modernization that many in the West and more particularly the U.S. foreign policy community believed would doom traditional societies. The industrialized West was now dependent on Saudi oil and thus Saudi stability for its own social and economic well-being. In turn, oil wealth provided Saudi Arabia a level of political, economic, and social stability and financed the creation of a modern patronage state. By 1975, the al-Saud had succeeded in building a viable state. Problems remained, but the Kingdom was on a stronger footing to confront threats and challenges.

Between 1975 and 2005, the Kingdom developed as an independent and powerful nation state in a number of ways. First and foremost, the Kingdom established itself as the principle ally of the United States not only in the Arab world but also in the greater Muslim world. Second, it became an undisputed energy superpower—the essential energy producer for the world and insurer of global economic stability. Third, the Kingdom became more assertive with regard to regional and global policy issues. From a regional security point of view, one critical issue made Saudi Arabia the indispensable partner of the West and close ally of the United States. Iran's revolutionary radicalism trumped all others in driving the ambiguity out of the relationship with Washington and making the Kingdom the centerpiece of U.S. relations in the Middle East. There were other concerns including anti-Communist and anti-Soviet policies that drove Riyadh and Washington's cooperation on Afghanistan, but those had existed for some time. Iranian issues have endured as a shared policy concern because of the Saudi leadership's opposition to Iranian political, economic and ideological pretentions

not only in the Gulf but the broader Middle East. The overriding strategic Iranian policy goal of hegemony in the Gulf is an anathema to Saudi views and interests and to those of the U.S. as well.

This chapter begins in 1975 with the first of a series of crises that involved the Kingdom, the United States, and Iran. The year 1979 converts tensions with Iran into open conflict and confrontation. The years 1975 to 2005 reflect the most collaborative and by far the most effective partnership between the United States and the West with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia assumed a position that one might describe as a first among equals within the GCC structure of the Gulf. Iran's revolutionary fervor threatened all the Sunni Arab states of the Gulf. During this time, the United States pushed the idea of Saudi Arabia as the indispensable partner.

Dealing with Iran – the 1970s

Persian hostility toward Arabia had been a fixture of the region from time in memoriam—it predates Islam. In the early sixteenth century, the decision by the first Shah, Ismail, to adopt Twelver Shi'ism as the official state religion of the Safavid Empire merely guaranteed that the struggle would continue at an ideological level as well. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 constituted a contemporary exclamation point in a long history of Ottoman and Sunni Arab conflict with Shi'a Persia and Iran. For Riyadh, after the neutralization of Nasserist Egypt and its evangelical promotion of Pan-Arab revolutionary ideology, the issue of Iran and the ambitions of the Shah moved to the front. Since the 1950s, Iran had received priority treatment from the U.S. in terms of aid and military training and equipment. It was clear that early on Washington viewed its relationship with the Iranian military and later the Shah as the keystone of security interests in the region. Saudi Arabia was important but the principle ally of the United States was Iran. After 1973, Washington's attachment to the Shah grew as policymakers increasingly began to see Iran as a proxy for the U.S. in the region opposing communism.

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The most prominent of these conflicts was rebellion in the Dhofar province of Oman where British Special Air Service and other units assisted the Sultan of Oman's army in battling Marxist rebels. In the early 1970s, the

United States had encouraged the Shah of Iran to send special forces, air, and naval units to assist the Sultanate. By the mid-1970s, there were between 5,000 and 15,000 Iranian military personnel in Oman fighting against the insurgency in Dhofar backed by the Soviets and South Yemen (People' Democratic Republic of Yemen—PDRY). It was an interesting conundrum. Understanding the Saudi position on Dhofar and Iranian support there provides an instructive window on the depth of Riyadh's antipathy for things Persian.

On the one hand were Iranians with the Shah's offensive pronouncements about being the "policeman of the Gulf" and troops in Oman, and on the other hand were the Communist-backed groups supported by the PDRY threatening the traditional regimes of the Gulf including Saudi Arabia itself. In attempting to deal with both problems, the Saudis launched a diplomatic campaign to end PDRY support for the Dhofari rebels, thereby removing the reason for the presence of Iranian troops on the Arabian Peninsula and at the same time curtailing the threat. Simultaneously, the Saudis were exploring ways that they might displace the Shah as the United States' principle ally in the Gulf. When the opportunity arrived, Riyadh made the most of it.

The Shah's mercurial temperament made Iranian policy increasingly unpredictable. These policy problems accelerated in the aftermath of the oil crisis and embargo of 1973. Dealing with the Shah had always been problematic. In the 1950s and 1960s he had threatened everything from declaring Iran's neutrality in the Cold War to abdication of the throne. In 1958, after the coup in Iraq toppled the Hashemite regime, the State Department warned the Department of Defense that the Shah was demanding support that was simply beyond that which should be provided. In arguing for limits on the Shah, the State Department used India as an example of commitments in aid stating that the United States could not refuse aid to "our other friends in the Middle East or even to certain sensitive countries such as India, whose 'neutralism' we may deplore but whose loss through neglect would be an even greater blow to the free world cause." Secretary of State John Foster Dulles bluntly weighed in, stating the Shah's demand for a bilateral agreement promising U.S. intervention against any threat including domestic threats was simply unacceptable. George Allen, Director of U.S. Information Agency (USIA), commented that whatever happened he was glad that "Dulles had decided to hold the line," because "the Shah was the best blackmailer that he knew of."[171] Confrontations similar to this were a fixture of U.S.-Iranian

relations for 25 years. These confrontations frustrated Washington and the Shah deeply resented what he saw as repeated personal humiliations and the shoddy treatment of his regime.

During the oil embargo of 1973, Iran continued to ship oil to the United States and he benefited greatly from the rapid increase in oil prices. This had pronounced effects on the Shah's behavior. First, his self-confidence soared, and second, the seething resentments of the past two decades came to the surface. His demands for weapons and higher oil prices became insatiable. In 1975, the assassination of King Feisal was not the only crisis. Richard Nixon was forced to resign the presidency as a result of the Watergate scandal and Vice President Gerald R. Ford had taken his place. In addition, the government of South Vietnam had collapsed in April. The Shah's demands on oil pricing threatened to send the stagnating U.S. economy into a deep recession. Some Ford administration officials including William E. Simon, the Secretary of the Treasury, and Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, sought to bring the Shah and his demands under control. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger told Ford, "if we get rid of the Shah, we will have a radical regime on our hands."[172] Oblivious to the Islamist threat, Kissinger of course thought that the "radical regime" would be leftist.

Facing an election in November, the Ford administration approached the Shah and the Saudis separately in September 1976 and asked for a price freeze. King Khalid and his advisors saw an opportunity to improve their situation and agreed in principle in return for closer ties and cooperation with Washington. The Shah rejected the overture. At this point, President Ford wrote to the Shah stating that another price rise would have dire consequences for the West and might well impact future arms deliveries. The letter infuriated the Shah who waited until after Ford lost the election to send him a response declaring that Iran would not "commit suicide" because the West could not put its house in order. He told the President that Iran could obtain arms elsewhere. He concluded saying: "Nothing could provoke more a reaction from us than this threatening tone from certain circles and their paternalistic attitude."[173] The Shah bragged to the editor of Al-Ahram, the Cairo newspaper, "Now we are the master, and our former masters are our slaves. Every day they beat a track to our door begging for favours" offering everything from arms to "nuclear power stations."[174]

This friction with Iran played directly into Riyadh's hands. The Saudis had been looking for a way to displace Iran as the preferred U.S. partner in

the region. Saudi officials had long wanted a special relationship with one of the great powers. The Shah's attitude and his unwillingness to compromise on oil prices paved the way for enhanced U.S.-Saudi relations as a means for Saudi Arabia to improve the security of the Kingdom and to challenge Iranian hegemony in the Gulf. At the Doha Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) conference in December 1976, Iran demanded a series of price hikes for the coming year. Assuming that the rises would occur, Tehran had based the entire Iranian government budget on the higher numbers.

Cooperating with the U.S., Saudi Arabia refused to increase pricing and, to underscore its power, increased oil production significantly. Saudi Arabian Minister of Petroleum, Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, stated he would "stick it to Iran" and he made good on that threat.[175] The OPEC meeting collapsed in disarray with Iran claiming that Saudi Arabia had stabbed the members in the back. The Shah suddenly found himself in an economic crisis. Foreign investment and aid plans had to be curtailed or ended. The troop commitments to Oman became an unnecessary expense. The situation forced Iran to request $500 million in loans from American and European banks to cover the shortfall.[176] Bitter, the Shah told one of his advisors, "The blasted Saudis have betrayed us and themselves."[177] Actually the Saudis had just taken advantage of the Shah's hubris and gone a long way toward accomplishing one of their long-term security goals. From Washington's perspective, Saudi Arabia looked far more reliable than the Shah ever did.

There was other fallout as well. The shortfall wrecked the Iranian budget. Unrest spread and, with no financial reserves, the Shah's regime floundered in the face of increasing protests.[178] The price of oil did collapse and widespread unrest followed. The crisis was complicated by the fact that the Shah had been secretly diagnosed with chronic leukemia in 1974.[179] By 1978, the disease was advancing, and the Shah was desperately seeking options for maintaining the dynasty. Despite all the contacts and cooperation with the Shah, U.S. intelligence services lacked any inkling of his illness. In hindsight, indications are that his illness was in part responsible for his irresolute response to the crisis and unrest that led to the collapse of the regime.

Saudi Arabia and the Crisis of 1979

The unforeseen collapse of Pahlavi Iran and the rise of a Shi'a dominated fundamentalist government with pan-Islamic ambitions led to a series of

crises that rocked the region and the Kingdom. Khomeini's Islamic Republic of Iran threatened to undo the status quo throughout the region. In *Velayat-e Fiqh: Hokumat-e Islami* (The Jurist's Guardianship: Islamic Government) in 1970, Khomeini proclaimed a new expanded role for Shi'a clergy. He contended that 'kingship' was pagan and un-Islamic. He went on to state that all Muslims had an obligation to oppose monarchy and that only the religious judges (*fuqaha*) had a right to rule.[180] These ideas became the foundation for the Iranian Constitution of 1979.[181] This was not just a Shi'a ideological threat, it was a direct political attempt to undermine the Sunni states of the Gulf.

The revolution in Iran was the first in a series of events in 1979 that rattled the Kingdom and the Gulf. In February, the Shah's government fell. In March, a Yemen border war between the YAR and the PDRY appeared to threaten Saudi Arabia's southern border regions. In addition, Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Peace Accords. By the summer, the new government in Afghanistan had shown its pro-Soviet tilt that would eventually lead to Soviet intervention in December. In November 1979, Iranian militants occupied the U.S. embassy and took the staff hostage. That same month Saudi fundamentalists, inspired by Khomeini, occupied the Grand Mosque in Mecca and were only ejected after a bloody siege. Iranian propaganda about U.S. involvement at Mecca spurred a mob in Islamabad, Pakistan to attack and burn the U.S. embassy. From Riyadh's perspective, it was an escalating crisis and getting progressively worse.

The Saudi government had sought only to displace the Shah as the preferred U.S. ally in the region, and now his regime had fallen with the potential for an anti-monarchy Shi'a cleric to replace him. Camp David had taken Egypt out of the confrontation with Israel, and at least for the foreseeable future there would be no realistic possibility of the Arabs confronting the Zionist state. The Soviets were now officially ensconced in Afghanistan. Riyadh's strategic ally, the U.S. found itself humiliated by the hostage crisis and the subsequent failed rescue attempt. But it was the occupation of the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the subsequent siege that really shook the Kingdom. No matter how misguided those participating in the siege, the fact that it occurred simultaneously with the events in Iran raised concerns that the Kingdom would implode. The burning of the U.S. embassy in Islamabad merely underscored the critical nature of the problem. The region was so inflamed that any rumor or propaganda initiative had the potential to create additional incidents.

The fact that events in Iran could have an impact in Mecca was shocking. That the rebel leader, Juhaiman ibn Muhammad ibn Saif al-Utaibi, was from a prominent Nejdi family and was an estranged student of Imam Abd-al-Aziz bin Baz, who would later become the Grand Mufti of Mecca, brought consternation. Juhaiman's doctrinal positions included a direct attack upon the al-Saud family and their rule, and impure outside influences. It resembled the revolt of the Ikhwan against Ibn Saud 50 years before. In addition, his doctrines rejected kingship and proclaimed the arrival of the Mahdi from the lineage of Hussein ibn Ali, the Shi'a martyr of Karbala and son of the Caliphate Ali. The Mahdi is the concept of a 'redeemer' who arrives to purify the world in preparation for the Day of Judgment. The Saudis put the revolt down and captured and executed Juhaiman and scores of his followers.

In the south, the United States and the Kingdom had backed the YAR in its struggle against the Communist backed PDRY and the National Democratic Front insurgency in the north. The YAR leader, Ali Abdullah Salih, played a duplicitous game using arms agreements with the Soviet Union, who also supported the PDRY, to wring aid and arms from Washington and Riyadh, but the quick reverses suffered by the YAR in the border war placed the situation in a different light. No matter how distasteful, Salih was better than the leftist leaders in the south. As a result, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia moved quickly to send more arms and supplies to the YAR. Once the situation stabilized, the Kingdom and Washington pondered how to deal with the crafty Salih in the north and the menacing leftists in the south.[182]

The net effect of 1979 was to drive U.S. and Saudi policies into a closer alignment. Two separate but mutual enemies had emerged in the region—the Soviets in Afghanistan and Yemen and the Shi'a Islamic government in Iran. Subsequent events in 1980 and 1981 including the Iran-Iraq War, the attempted Iranian-backed coup in Bahrain, and the formation of the GCC would further enhance the relationship and cooperation on the Iranian issue. In 1982, King Khalid died. The new king, Fahd, was one of the Sudairi Seven that had strongly supported Feisal in his struggle with King Saud and generally wanted closer ties with the United States. The security relationship with the United States deepened despite the deep fundamental differences on the issue of Palestine. The strategic interests of both states coincided in a way that trumped, at least for the time being, other concerns.

Despite this synergy of interests, the United States, having freed itself from Vietnam, sought security paradigms that limited direct American

exposure. There was also the growing awareness that the lower the U.S. profile, the better for Muslim allies. Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan continued to provide a platform from which to attack any government in the region whose cooperation with the United States became too visible. Attempting to avoid a broad commitment to the Gulf, U.S. President Jimmy Carter issued a policy statement, the Carter Doctrine, committing itself to the defense of the Gulf States against outside aggression and subversion. The doctrine as enunciated by Carter was, in fact, little different from policy statements by several U.S. Presidents and looked and sounded very much like the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957. Many in Washington hoped that some type of regional cooperation among the Arabs might enhance security and form at least a partial counterbalance to Iran.

The U.S. hoped the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would develop into a collective security organization with Saudi Arabia in the lead. Washington encouraged this vision both in the Gulf and with Riyadh. This view fit the Saudi vision for the Gulf as well. Given its relative size and resources, the assumption was that the Kingdom would emerge as the de facto leader of a mutual defense arrangement. However, this assumption failed to take into consideration the sensitivities of the Gulf region to real or implied infringements on sovereignty. Security cooperation among the Arab states does not fit the security paradigm for Gulf states—one based on series of bilateral agreements with a 'great power' providing the guarantees.

Saudi Arabia: The GCC, Afghanistan, and the Gulf Wars

Following the regional crises of 1979, the Gulf region entered a 30-year period of conflict and instability that continues today. The first two decades of conflict differs from the last decade. As the 1980s began, Khomeini advocated a revolutionary pan-Islamic agenda that he intended to export first to the Gulf and then globally. In almost every respect, it was anti-American or sharply conflicted with U.S. interests. To the Muslim world, Khomeini argued that the U.S. and its Congress was controlled by Zionist political groups and was complicit with the Israelis in oppressing the Palestinian people. To the developing world, he represented Washington and the West as the exploiters of their national riches and the supporters of pro-western autocratic regimes. What the Iranians viewed as "Persia's Gulf" would clearly be the first target for exporting their revolutionary zeal.

With its Shi'a majority, Iraq appeared to be a fertile ground for revolutionary agitation. With a significant Shi'a population and military weakness, Kuwait was also high on the list. However, Bahrain, with its Shi'a majority and proximity to the Shi'a in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, offered the opportunity to crack the ring of Sunni-led Arab states in the Gulf. The goal would be to overthrow the Al-Khalifa and then use Bahrain as a base from which to undermine Riyadh by spreading revolutionary fervor among the Shi'a there. Carter doctrine or not, Washington was paralyzed by the Iranian hostage crisis. From the point of view of Saudi officials, the aspirations of the Shah had morphed into a threat posed by a radical Shi'a cleric with delusions of a new Islamic order. It was as if the messianic *safaviyya* of the sixteenth century had returned and the Iranians—Persians—intended to reassert not only the primacy but also their control of what had been an Arab Sunni Gulf since the middle of the eighteenth century.[183]

As the Kingdom, the Arab emirates, and their allies contemplated the next step in dealing with Iran, Iraq acted. In July 1979, Saddam Hussein, Vice President of Iraq and long-time strongman behind President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, took over the government to prevent Bakr's plans to unify Ba'athist Iraq and Ba'athist Syria.[184] Firmly in power, Saddam saw the chaos in Iran and the purges in the armed forces as an opportunity to be exploited and forestall any attempt by Iran to undermine Ba'athist rule in Iraq. Saddam abrogated the Algiers Treaty of 1975 that delineated the boundaries along the waterways of the Shatt-al-Arab, and on 17 September, launched a full scale, if badly planned, attack on southern Iran. He believed that Iran would be forced to withdraw and make territorial concessions to Iraq in the oil rich border areas of Khuzestan.

The initial attack and first years of the war were generally viewed positively in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf. Initially, Iran was on the defensive, but as the war dragged on, concerns began to arise. In Iran, the Iraqi attack galvanized support for Khomeini's regime and resulted in a protracted war that Iraq would have lost but for the material and financial support of the Gulf Arabs, the West, and the United States. Iraq's income from oil had plummeted, and it was turning toward the Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia, for financial support.[185]

Concerned about Iran widening the conflict in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the Arab emirates of the Gulf, with western encouragement, created the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on 26 May 1981. The stated objective was

to coordinate internal and external security policy in the Gulf and as well as to share intelligence and offer support to allies. Just as the Iraqi attack on Iran had solidified support for the Iranian regime, Iranian threats against Arab regimes solidified Arab governments in the Gulf. Old Arab rivalries and boundary disputes, while not forgotten, took a backseat to the existential threat posed by Tehran. Of course, the Iranians encouraged the Arab Gulf unity inadvertently by not only their rhetoric about overthrowing the monarchies but also by their actions.[186]

Concerned about Iran widening the conflict in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the Arab emirates of the Gulf, with western encouragement, created the Gulf Cooperation Council ...

In December 1981, a plot by the so-called "Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain" to overthrow al-Khalifa rule was discovered. The Front proposed to establish an Islamic republic headed by an Iranian ayatollah, Hadi al-Mudarrisi. Authorities in the Gulf arrested 73 people including Saudis, Bahrainis, Omanis, and Kuwaitis. For the Arabs of the Gulf, the struggle with Iran had become an overt struggle for survival. In the case of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia signed a mutual defense pact and began to support the al-Khalifa by sharing the output from the Abu Safa oil field and using the Bahrain oil refinery to refine Saudi crude. In addition, the Kingdom began to explore ways to use Bahrain as a center for banking and finance in an effort to shore up the economy.[187]

Meanwhile, relations between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. had cooled over a series of issues, most prominently the Camp David accords and the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Riyadh broke relations and cut off aid to Egypt, which resulted in anti-Saudi Egyptian propaganda, attacks unseen for a decade. Sharp differences aside, Riyadh and Washington had too many common interests to allow any one problem to undo the relationship.[188] By 1982, the situation with the United States further eased, and to Saudi Arabia's benefit. Riyadh had obtained the new Reagan Administration's approval for upgraded F-15 and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, and the U.S. had made clear its support for the anti-Soviet Muslim rebels in Afghanistan. At the same time, new problems surfaced. Israel's 1982 war in Lebanon against the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) made a bad situation there even worse. At the same time, Iraq suffered a large-scale defeat at the hands of the Iranians, and the Syrians cut off Iraq's last pipeline

for shipping oil to sea. From a Saudi point of view, the U.S. position on both issues was positive. First, Washington had called for the Israelis to back off and allow an evacuation of PLO forces from Lebanon; second, it was apparent that the U.S. wanted to undermine Syrian influence in Lebanon and to prevent an Iranian victory in the war with Iraq. Washington and Riyadh had already come to an understanding on Afghanistan; Saudi Arabia would finance and facilitate the war against the Soviets and the U.S. would provide the weaponry.

By the time King Khalid died in 1982, the Kingdom was rapidly modernizing with massive expenditures on infrastructure, education and medical care. Khalid had also put the Saudi military on the cusp of a massive modernization program—including modern aircraft and growing capabilities for its land forces, navy, and the Saudi National Guard under then Prince Abdullah. Its security posture continued to be a balancing act. In the face of the Iranian Revolution, Saudi Arabia's support for the creation of the GCC and its unofficial support for Iraq's war with Iran underscored its opposition to Iranian pretensions about control of the Gulf. However, Riyadh attempted to avoid direct confrontations and to ride out the regional conflicts. Saudi foreign policy reflected a very conservative approach to problems and, despite almost continual regional conflicts, Saudi leadership avoided commitments that threatened its survival. Saudi foreign policy was further aggravated by the ups and downs of U.S.-Saudi relations. For Saudi Arabia, the United States was a necessary but highly problematic ally. The two nations shared critical, common strategic interests and disagreed on other significant issues. The main disagreement was over the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The Saudi leadership understood their cooperation on energy issues was absolutely critical to the health of the western economies and yet their cooperation and support did not seem to translate into the level of influence they expected.

King Fahd's Reign 1982-1996

Following Khalid's death, a political compromise made the transition of power to King Fahd (r. 1982-2005) seamless. King Fahd continued the Kingdom's security policy to align, to the greatest degree possible, with a superpower. An alliance with the Soviet Union was unthinkable, not only because of its Communist ideology but also because of the Soviet client states in the region—Syria, the PDRY, Libya—and their avowed revolutionary hostility

to monarchy in general and the Kingdom in particular. In the dangerous world of the Gulf region, security required an alliance and only the United States, despite all the attendant problems of that relationship, was the only suitable great power ally.

From the 1950s, King Fahd and his brothers had consistently supported a pro-western policy with the United States as the primary strategic ally. Still in some quarters the al-Fahd (Sudairi Seven) was considered too pro-western; Abdullah's role as crown prince, his piety and ties to the Saudi tribes reassured traditional elements in Saudi society and provided political cover for the growing security relationship with the United States. In many respects, the appointment of Bandar bin Sultan bin Abd-al-Aziz as the Saudi Ambassador to Washington would come to symbolize this expanded relationship between Washington and Riyadh. Bandar, a western educated air force pilot, son of the Saudi Minister of Defense and Aviation (MODA) Prince Sultan ibn Abd-al-Aziz, and the king's nephew, became an important link between King Fahd and his government and the highest levels of the U.S. government including the Oval Office. Given the crises engulfing the region, the close relationship between Riyadh and Washington in many instances allowed for seamless coordination of policy and quiet resolution of differences.[189] Perhaps more importantly during Fahd's rule, Saudi Arabia attained the status that it had long sought as an indispensable ally of the United States and its interests both in the Islamic world and globally.

The cooperation on Afghanistan that began under the Carter Administration intensified under President Reagan. When Fahd came to the throne, the Saudi security policy was set: cooperation and coordination in support of the Afghan resistance movement and opposition to Iranian hegemony and revolutionary plans in the region. In Afghanistan, this policy translated into encouraging foreign fighters from the Gulf, private sources of funding to support the Islamic war effort against the Soviets, and looking the other way with regard to the fighter's fundamentally anti-western ideological bent. With regard to Iran, this policy translated into supporting Ba'athist Iraq and looking the other way when Saddam Hussein committed atrocities including the gassing of civilians in Kurdistan. As the conflict with Iran turned more in Tehran's favor, concern grew around the Gulf.

In 1986, major defeats of the Iraqi army resulted in Iraq intensifying its air campaign against population centers but also against Iranian shipping in the Gulf, including the huge oil-transshipping center at Kharq Island.

The attacks brought Iranian reprisals that included Saudi, and particularly Kuwaiti, shipping. Iran hoped that both would urge the Iraqis to back off. These events precipitated the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers under the U.S. flag and a U.S. naval reaction in the Gulf that destroyed the Iranian navy. The combination of U.S. involvement, a brutal campaign by Iraq that targeted war-weary Iranian cities and a series of Iraqi victories on the ground aided by U.S. intelligence support and advice brought Iran to the breaking point. These factors, including the accidental shoot-down of an Iranian airliner by the USS *Vincennes*, provided the argument by which Khomeini's advisors convinced him that the war had to be ended before it destroyed the Islamic Republic.[190] In July 1988, the Iranians agreed to a cease-fire.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of King Fahd's reign had less to do with any regional conflict and more to do with the global economy. In the early 1980s the price of oil dropped from $32 per barrel to $15, and by 1986 it had sunk as low as $8 per barrel. The effect on the Saudi budget was devastating. When combined with the outlays for modernization and subsidies to support Iraq and other foreign aid requirements, it severely constrained the Saudi economy. The oil price collapse ended the post-1973 oil boom and all sectors of the economy began to feel the pressure. The burgeoning young population with fresh college graduates also complicated the problem—there were no jobs. With a large foreign workforce in the Kingdom, the term "Saudization"—replacing foreign technicians and experts with Saudis—came into vogue. The economic situation also resulted in new social pressures that threatened to upend the status quo. Proponents of women entering the general workforce advocated women should be allowed to drive. Educational opportunities also resulted in a rebalancing of economic opportunities as Nejdi educational standards rose to parity with those of the traditionally more cosmopolitan Hejazis. The constriction of oil wealth also made social, class and economic differences more apparent. These social issues represented the normal frictions and challenges of a society transforming itself from what had been a purely patronage society to a more complex but still patronage-based institutionalized economy and state bureaucracy.[191]

These rapid economic and social changes brought political, social, and economic pressures, and in a society steeped in the tenets of Wahhabi Islam, brought a reaction against what Champion in *The Paradoxical Kingdom* refers to as "asabiyya capitalism."[192] Asabiyya as a political, economic and social term (shared solidarity, i.e., family, clan, and tribe) was introduced by

Abd-al-Rahman Abu Zaid ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun.[193] The Saudi reaction to these societal pressures coalesced in two historical events. The first was the end of the Cold War in 1991. Now Communism, the first enemy, was gone; the Russians were no longer slaughtering Muslims in Afghanistan. All of those Islamic fighters, including many who had been thoroughly radicalized, came home to societies stressed by austerity and social and economic change, and they brought their political and religious radicalization to the mix. In addition, they brought with them a sense of confidence that they had defeated the Soviet superpower and their Afghan allies and that they had the skills and determination to do it again. While some officials in Riyadh and Washington expressed concerns as a whole neither policy apparatus fully understood the implications.

The second event was the end of the Iran-Iraq War. In the view of the Arab Gulf and the West, Saddam Hussein acted rashly starting a poorly planned and incompetently executed war with Iran. The Arab Gulf States and, for that matter the West, including the United States believed that they had to collectively bail him out. When the war ended in 1988, Iraq was in economic shambles and owed the Gulf States billions. Saddam held that he had protected the Arab Gulf from Iran and that they owed Iraq for this sacrifice. Hence, Iraq attempted to have its loans from the conflict forgiven—the Gulf States refused. Oil prices were at record lows; Iraq then demanded that Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states reduce oil production to boost the price. In response, some of the Arab Gulf States actually increased production. Iraq then demanded Kuwait pay Baghdad for oil illegally pumped from a shared field—Kuwait rejected the demand.

On 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait and moved large troop concentrations toward the border with Saudi Arabia. On 6 August, Dick Cheney, U.S. Secretary of Defense, arrived in Riyadh and convinced King Fahd and his advisors that the Kingdom was under threat of direct attack. The Saudi government agreed to a plan where the Kingdom would receive more than 500,000 foreign troops, most of them Christian and many of them women, into the Kingdom to defend it from Iraq.[194] The introduction of foreign forces into the Kingdom demonstrated western resolve to protect the Kingdom but it also scandalized more conservative elements of Saudi society. Even more troubling, a significant number of the Americans remained after the Gulf War concluded conducting 'no-fly' missions over Iraq.

In protest, some Saudi clerics submitted a Memorandum of Advice asking for a review of all government policies. Other, more radical elements called for the overthrow of the al-Saud. In May 1991, Islamist preachers submitted a "Letter of Demands" to King Fahd. One of the key issues was the relationship with the United States. Arrests were made but it was quickly followed by attempts to coopt the leaders. Then in 1992, clerics sent another Memorandum to Sheikh Abd-al-Aziz bin Baz, the state's senior religious authority, demanding a religious review of government policy.[195] Yet another manifestation of growing radicalism came in the form of a young man, Osama bin Laden, who had fought in the Afghan war against the Soviets. Prior to the Second Gulf War, 1990-1991, Bin Laden had proposed a simplistic, unrealistic plan to defeat the Iraqis with a *mujahidin* army; government officials rejected that plan, preferring armored divisions and aircraft. Bin Laden was humiliated and enraged. After the war, he began to preach about the evils of the West and their corrupting influences on the Kingdom.[196] As a Saudi intelligence official put it, the experience "revealed his [Bin Laden's] arrogance and his haughtiness."[197]

In the late 1980s, Bin Laden established an organization, Al-Qaeda (the Base), largely composed of fighters from the Afghan war. In the aftermath of the Second Gulf War, the organization and associated groups launched a series of attacks on Saudi and western targets. It culminated in a series of increasingly spectacular attacks first on the U.S. Embassies in Africa, then on the USS *Cole* in Yemen and ultimately the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington DC. Since the early 1990s, Saudi authorities had been attempting to apprehend Bin Laden. In the beginning, the focus had been his anti-regime preaching and agitation. Saudi Arabia withdrew his Saudi citizenship in 1994. As the scope of Al-Qaeda's operations grew, authorities in Riyadh attempted to have him arrested but were unsuccessful. They saw Bin Laden and his ilk as a terrorist threat but were far more concerned about rising internal Islamist dissent.

King Fahd's Reign: The Regency 1996–2006

In 1995, King Fahd was incapacitated by a stroke and Crown Prince Abdullah took over day-to-day responsibility for the government and policy. In the aftermath of the Second Gulf War, Saudi internal and external security policy returned to what could be called a more traditional path. The Arab-Israeli

conflict and the continued presence of significant numbers of U.S. military personnel in the Kingdom provided a catalyst for growing radical Islamist movements. There was also significant second-guessing of U.S. strategy in the region. Saddam Hussein remained in power and the growing influence of Iran and its proxies in the region contributed to a growing sense in Riyadh that U.S. and Saudi views on the 'means' to achieve shared policy goals were diverging.

In 1996, the U.S. military housing installation at Khobar Towers near Dhahran was bombed. Attributed to Shi'a radicals, Hezbollah, and Iran, the attack heightened Saudi concerns that U.S. presence was having a detrimental effect on the Kingdom's security. In addition, frictions over the investigation had a negative impact on cooperation.[198] As al-Qaeda attacks on U.S. installations (embassies in Africa and the USS *Cole* in Yemen) mounted, the U.S. began to demand a more proactive approach to counterterrorism. While the Saudis shared U.S. concerns over terrorism in general and Bin Laden and al-Qaeda in particular, they pursued political and security views in a way that avoided confrontation. Saudi security officials attempted to get others to detain Bin Laden and his associates and quietly hand him over. In pursuing radicals within the Kingdom, the government tended to soft-pedal issues until they could no longer be ignored and then to take quiet action to deal with them.

The King is not a dictator nor is he an absolute ruler; he rules by consensus. A significant portion of the population must support major policy moves. The stresses of the economic and social problems of the 1980s, combined with the Gulf War of 1990 and its aftermath, created a situation in which the country was clearly divided about what was the correct path for the future. In Saudi Arabia, Islamist agitation had taken hold. In many quarters, propaganda portrayed attacks on westerners as protecting Islam. The Saudi government tread carefully in its reaction to radical Islam particularly when much of the Arab street saw the problem as self-inflicted by the West because of its policies toward Muslims.

The King is not a dictator nor is he an absolute ruler; he rules by consensus.

Even 9/11 had a less than salutary effect on Riyadh. The attacks on the U.S., while strongly condemned by Crown Prince Abdullah, highlighted the radical problem within Saudi Arabia—most of the 9/11 attackers were Saudi nationals. In the aftermath of 9/11, Saudi proclamations that attacks

on westerners threaten the state and the prosperity of the nation were simply not enough to stem the rising tide of radicalism or the skepticism of the citizenry. Like Ibn Saud facing the Ikhwan threat in the 1920s, the Saudi Arabian government needed an incident that demonstrated that the radicals had gone beyond the point that any good Muslim should tolerate.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as they now called themselves began to attack Muslims and westerners indiscriminately and provided that consensus. In April 2003, the United States announced that it was moving the regional U.S. Central Command Headquarters from Saudi Arabia to Qatar. Just days later, AQAP launched a series of attacks on foreign worker compounds that killed Muslims and westerners alike. In November 2003, AQAP attacked a residential compound in Riyadh with a truck bomb, killing 17. Almost all the victims were Muslims sparking outrage among the Saudi populace. The security forces of the Kingdom moved to crush the rebels and in two years of fighting killed or captured most of them at a significant loss of more than 100 security personnel. The most important factor was the population. On the street, most Saudis supported the *salafi* ideals of an Islamic state—a return to the beliefs and practices of a purer Islamic era, but it became obvious that AQAP had no real agenda other than destroying the state and killing other Muslims in the process—it was a promise of "more violence and unfulfilled aspirations."[199]

By 2005, the U.S. was still involved in Iraq and Afghanistan; Iran's bellicosity had not dissipated; and the Saudi leadership steered clear of U.S. handling of Middle East conflicts. Oil prices soared, filling Saudi Arabia's coffers with the funds sorely required for development, defense, and social needs. In August 2005, King Fahd died and Crown Prince Abdullah took his place. Abdullah had run the country for 10 years as regent. The King's great challenge was to transition the Kingdom and the al-Saud to a new century and a new generation of rulers while maintaining the unity of both. The economy and society now faced the problems of a large state with a fast growing young population.

Summary

During this period of the modern Saudi State (1975-2005) certain issues remained constant. Iran never receded as a threat to the interests of Saudi Arabia or the Arabian Gulf. The oil price victories of 1977-1978 that

humiliated the Shah turned to ashes as the Islamic Republic of Iran emerged under openly anti-monarchial clerics that called for the overthrow of the Arab monarchies and emirates of the Gulf. Iran would be the ever-present security problem. Tehran's policies and views of its role in the Gulf are simply incompatible with that of the Arabs and the West. Although Iran continued to be a problem, there were positive results. The Arab states of the Gulf demonstrated more unity. Issues still exist among the Arab states but Iran has made it a necessity for the Arab Gulf to look beyond their differences at the real strategic threat to their states and prosperity. Another constant issue is Yemen—all the political and diplomatic maneuvering in the past 30 years has done little to change the situation. Yemen is still a fractious and problematic failed state.

Perhaps the one event that no one saw or understood was the impact of the end of the Cold War on the Kingdom and Gulf region. In 1975, no one would have believed that the Soviet Union would no longer exist in 15 years, nor would anyone have believed that the Kingdom and its alliance with the United States would have contributed so significantly to the collapse. Afghanistan was the catalyst that helped push the Soviet regime to the brink. The Afghan war created the illusion among radicalized, underemployed, frustrated Arab youth that they alone had defeated the Soviets. This illusion, when coupled with the real stresses associated with the economic and social dislocation of rapid change and aggravated by the collapse of oil prices, led to the belief that the West and their allies could be readily defeated. This misunderstanding nevertheless would create a global security problem (radical Islam) that continues today.

The Saudi monarchy was left with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, issues that represented immediate existential problems for the Kingdom—Iran and Iraq—required a security relationship with the United States. While on the other, the end of the Afghan war and the dissolution of the Soviet Union caused many to conclude that the relationship with Washington and the West was no longer necessary. The Kingdom had to navigate between security requirements, alliances, and the need for social and economic reform versus the conservative restraints of the ideological underpinning for the state—Wahhabi Islam. The Kingdom survived and prospered and arrived at the beginning of the twenty-first century in a reasonably strong position.

5. The Reign of King Abdullah and the Contemporary Reality

An interesting phenomenon has occurred in futures analysis regarding Saudi Arabia in the last eight years. In the decade or so between the beginning of the large-scale al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist attacks on western and pro-western interests, the "fragility" of the Saudi state was a big topic of concern.[200] Saudi Arabia and Wahhabi Islam are blamed, it would seem at times, for everything from climate change to the malefactors behind a plot to institute sharia law and a new global Caliphate. Others saw what they viewed as a reticence to act against radical Sunni extremists as a sign of the Kingdom's weakness and imminent demise. Such views not only reflect a lack of knowledge about the structure of Saudi politics and society but they also exhibit socio-centric western views of what constitutes stability. With regard to stability, as one former senior Foreign Service officer put it, "People can talk about instability all they want but I feel confident that within a span of two or three individuals, I can tell you who the King of Saudi Arabia will be ten years from now."[201] Therefore, there are two general themes that are the primary focus of this chapter. First, western analysis ascribing instability to the Kingdom is grossly exaggerated. Second, within the context of the last nine years (the reign of King Abdullah ibn Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud), the political, security, economic, and social developments in Saudi Arabia have assured stability for the future.

Interpretation: Gaining the Saudi Perspective on Internal Challenges

The monarchy has proved itself to be far more adaptive than otherwise thought. Saudi solutions to their problems are not western solutions and do not conform to western paradigms of change or progress. It is a different political, economic, and social system that exists within a specific socio-cultural and geopolitical context and it contrasts significantly from that of western societies.

In the case of Saudi Arabia, the western-centric view sees instability at every turn. Issues from "women's rights" to "corruption" to "democratic

government" to an unwillingness to crack down on various forms of Islamic fundamentalism, i.e., *salafi* movements, is seen as a harbinger of collapse. Concerning these issues, the Kingdom is judged from a western perspective; gender issues are a case in point. The issue of women's rights per se is not a threat to the stability of the Kingdom but it is a hindrance. Tom Lippman in *Saudi Arabia on the Edge* writes, "other than terrorism, probably no issue has tarnished Saudi Arabia's reputation among Americans and other Westerners as much as the deplorable status of women." This is correct, particularly in light of the fact that the power of women in the West has expanded rapidly in the last two decades. Any Saudi reforms cannot be perceived as externally western generated; they must come from within Saudi Arabia. As a result, they will likely be slow and no doubt fraught with political risk for the state. It is the Saudis that will judge their timing, extent, and method of implementation. King Abdullah made strides in this direction, and it must be remembered that King Feisal's push to educate women in the 1960s was considered in Saudi Arabia a radical departure from tradition.[202] King Abdullah's successors are the ones who will judge their interests and act accordingly.

The issue of corruption is another area where western-centric perceptions clash with the Saudi practice. Saudi Arabia is a patronage society. Its institutions function within the context of that society. In a patronage society, the difference between patronage and corruption also encompasses a very large gray area. Here again the western-centric view of corruption includes most forms of patronage. In the United States in particular, the bipartisan progressive movement was in large part aimed at up-rooting overt corruption as well as corruption through patronage. Nevertheless, informal patronage continues to play a huge role in the U.S. political and economic system—who your family is and whom you know is important—but it is usually informal as opposed to institutionalized. In the West, the theory is that institutions are blind to family, race, politics, gender, etc.—of course, that is the ideal and often not the reality. In any Middle Eastern society, the reality is more openly, perhaps more honestly, accepted; institutions are extensions of tribal, clan, and familial ties and thus a part of the patronage system.

A form of patronage also has implications in the political arena. Saudi Arabia is not a totalitarian state. It is not an autocratic state. It is an authoritarian state based on rule by consensus. The King and his advisors rarely act unilaterally on any issue of importance. First, a consensus is formed, and

the consensus extends well beyond the immediate group of senior officials and advisors. In Saudi Arabia, the interests of the different groups in society are represented through the patronage system. It is a system that attempts to take into account the interests of various groups, a responsibility that extends down the patronage chain. It is not western-style democratic government based on western conceptions of civil government and democratic norms. It is Middle Eastern-style representative government and, from a representational point of view, it has proven far more effective and uniting than any of the Middle Eastern republican systems to date. The very intent of the system is to obtain the broadest level of consensus possible without sacrificing the ability of the government to act. For this reason, the monarchies have better records on stability than any of the republics, especially with regard to an orderly transfer for power.

Since the founding of the Kingdom, the Third Saudi State, the propensity on the part of the U.S. has been toward fretting and pessimism vis-à-vis Saudi institutions and their capability to make them work. The tendency has been to offer advice about a political and dynastic system that is marginally understood at best. Internal security issues and fundamentalist Islam are two areas where western views and a marginal understanding of the actual situation on the ground affect western perceptions of Saudi policy. Few in the West understand the nuanced approach used by the Saudi Arabian government in dealing with legitimate fundamentalist and radical jihadist Islam. Wahhabi Islam is not the root of 'all evil.' As previously discussed, it is a reform movement within one of the four recognized Sunni madhhabs, or schools of religious law. In addition, Salafist beliefs and movements are by and large not violent; focused on personal *ijtihad* as opposed to external *jihad*.[203] But, just like any religious fundamentalist belief structure based on literal interpretations of scripture, the door is open for fringe groups to make radical interpretations. In virtually every case, radical, violent movements in the Islamic world have at their root political, economic and social grievances. Just as Marxism or other "-isms" and other global religions have provided the ideological façade for real or perceived grievances, in the Muslim world, the ideological overlay is an interpretation of Islam compatible with the temporal aims of those doing the interpreting.

The Saudi-Nejdi-Wahhabi context adds a level of complexity that makes understanding Islam difficult. It is far simpler to have a monolithic view of Wahhabi Islam. Saudi Arabia had been well served by its very conservative

religious and social outlook. It has provided the Kingdom with a legitimacy that is missing with most ruling systems in the Arab Middle East. Conservative Islam has been a potent ally for the West and the United States in the Middle East. It has not only served the Kingdom well, but also the United States.[204]

Conservative Islam has been a potent ally for the West and the United States in the Middle East.

Gaining the Saudi Perspective on External Geopolitical and Security Issues

Western misconceptions about Saudi internal issues and structures also impacts understanding of Saudi external policies. Saudi approaches are often different—but not inherently inferior to western policies. This lack of capacity to see the situation from a different political and cultural context has created disconnects that have resulted in misunderstandings of Saudi external policies. The fact is that the Kingdom has survived and prospered in arguably the most volatile region in the world. Often, Saudi policies, particularly those that relate to the Middle East, have proven closer to the mark than those of the West.

For example, in 1994, Riyadh supported the southern independence movement in Yemen because unity could not be imposed at the point of a gun on northern and southern cultures that were fundamentally different; they questioned the failure to remove Saddam while leaving the Sunnis in charge in 1991; they questioned the efficacy of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and absolutely opposed the installation of a Shi'a government arguing that it would become an Iranian puppet; they counseled against the surge in Afghanistan arguing that tactically and strategically the U.S. would have little to show for it; and they argued that failing to support 'moderate' rebels in Syria would aid not only the Assads but also radical Sunni jihadist groups.[205]

As if this were not enough, in 2006, the second Bush administration ignored Saudi, PLO, and even Israeli advice and pressed ahead with its plans to democratize the West Bank and Gaza through an election that pitted the Palestinian Authority against Hamas. Heedless of the warnings that Hamas might win, Washington pressed ahead. When Hamas won, it placed the U.S. and its allies in the embarrassing and hypocritical situation of refusing to

recognize the elected Palestinian government and supporting the party that lost the election. This debacle was compounded by the failure of the U.S., from Riyadh's point of view, to adequately support the government of Lebanon. As a result, Hezbollah expanded its influence and control at the expense of Christian and Sunni political groups. From a regional point of view, the Saudi government saw one U.S. misstep after another, while Iranian policy extended Tehran's influence and Shi'a clout in an arc from Iran through Iraq to Syria and Lebanon.[206]

Figure 8. King Abdullah ibn Abd-al-Aziz welcomes President George W. Bush at the king's ranch at Al-Janadriyah, on the outskirts of Riyadh, on 16 May 2008. Photo used by permission of Newscom.

The so-called "Arab Spring" revolts added a new level of tension to the relationship and underscored the Kingdom's readiness to act unilaterally if necessary to protect its interests. In 2011, Saudi Arabia believed U.S. policy had helped precipitate the fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.[207] The Saudis absolutely opposed the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and, despite official U.S. support for the elected government, encouraged the military revolt that would eventually remove the MB from power. In Bahrain, Saudi Arabia obtained a unanimous GCC vote to intervene and with the United

Arab Emirates, used police and army units to support the government against the Shi'a uprising.

With regard to the Iranian nuclear program, the Saudis believe it is a weapons program and that sanctions and negotiations will not produce a verifiable agreement with the Iranians. Both Riyadh and Washington want to see Iranian regional ambitions and the nuclear program curtailed; however, behind the communiqués and photo ops, there are fundamental differences in meaning and tactics. In the case of Iran, the Saudis are concerned that the United States is either naïve or perhaps pursuing a new agenda in the Gulf with Iran.[208] Saudi hostility to Iran is fundamental; "The Saudis fear Iran as a subversive regional rival, geopolitically in unstable countries such as Iraq and Syria and ideologically as a Shia power challenging the Saudis' fundamentalist Sunni creed."[209]

Policy differences between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia over Syria erupted into the open. The Saudis believed the Obama administration's assurances that they supported an end to the Assad regime and would act on their "redline" concerning the use of weapons of mass destruction. Riyadh viewed U.S. refusal to act after the Syrian regime's use of poison gas on civilians as a shocking betrayal of trust. As one senior Gulf military officer put it, "What people here and most of Sunni population think is that the USA has sold the alliance with SA [Saudi Arabia] and [the] rest of the Arab Nations for Iran!" Not only did the U.S. draw a "redline" and then back down acquiescing to a Russian-sponsored compromise, but within a matter of weeks, Washington also announced that it had been holding secret talks with Iran on the nuclear program with the goal of an agreement that would lift sanctions.[210]

To Riyadh, the connection appeared obvious. Washington, instead of striking the Syrian regime, an Iranian ally, for using poison gas, supported a Russian-sponsored compromise in order to preserve what it hoped would be a breakthrough in negotiations with Iran. That Oman had helped broker the secret talks only intensified Saudi concerns given that Oman, a state dominated by the Kharijite Ibadi Islamic sect, had long demonstrated a propensity to pursue an independent course despite its membership in the GCC. The talks also raised questions about the United States' actual commitment to preventing a nuclear armed Iran given that Tehran had made it quite clear that they have no intention of giving up their nuclear capabilities or their right to enrichment. Even in the event of an agreement, Tehran would retain the capacity for nuclear breakout in six to 12 months. Subsequently, despite

U.S. reassurances, the Saudis made it clear that they expect the West and the U.S. to acquiesce to the Kingdom's parity with Iran in nuclear capability.[211]

Riyadh was also concerned about implications for the Sunni community. Saudi officials expressed concern that the survival of the Assad regime was not the only problem associated with U.S. reluctance to become more involved in the Syrian problem and warned that it was spreading to Iraq. "When ISIS first appeared in Syria in 2011, Saudi Arabia tried to galvanize support for the moderate Syrian opposition against the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad. The U.S. refused to listen."[212] The United States' meager support for the less radical Sunni opposition in Syria opened the door for radical jihadists to proliferate. The less radical elements in the Syrian opposition found themselves at the mercy of the Assad regime on the one hand and the radical jihadists on the other.[213] In short, Washington demanded that the opposition fight by acceptable western rules of warfare that put them at a disadvantage in a vicious civil war and then refused meaningful support. U.S. policy was aimed at bolstering acceptable resistance groups but not enough that they could actually topple the Assad regime. The former British Chief of Staff, David Richards, viewed the half measures as useless, "[policy] has to be creating an army or nothing." Given that the more radical groups were better funded, U.S. policies failed to accomplish any of its goals.[214]

Repeated expressions of concern from the Kingdom and other key Arab allies in the Gulf that U.S. policy was not only assuring the survival of the Assad regime and Iranian goals in the region, but also creating a potentially potent threat in the form of a more radicalized Sunni community went unheeded—that is until ISIS moved into Iraq and captured its second largest city, Mosul. From 2011 to 2013, the U.S. administration failed to grasp the strategic connection between Assad's survival and Iranian strategic goals, and the potential security implications of empowering the most radical Sunni elements. However, former CIA Director Leon Panetta explained that in 2012, both he and then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged President Obama to arm "moderate Syrian rebels."[215]

ISIS success has served as a force multiplier spurring groups opposed to the Iranian backed regimes in Damascus and Baghdad to unite with the more radical ISIS.[216] In Syria, Assad's forces have tended to focus on opposition groups that have the potential to garner western support while to some extent ignoring ISIS. The rationale is that ISIS and the more radical Islamic groups will never acquire the support from the West to unseat the

Damascus government while the less radical elements might.[217] ISIS' goal of consolidating its rule in Eastern Iraq has also apparently "dovetailed' with Assad's decision to focus on holding western Syria.

The successes of ISIS in Iraq and Syria resulted in King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia using public statements to the media to spur western action against ISIS. While Washington pulled together the alliance between the West and Arab states, it was Abdullah's blunt warning about the direct threat posed by ISIS to Europe and the United States that turned up the political heat in Washington. "While not mentioning any terrorist groups by name, King Abdullah's statement appeared aimed at drawing Washington and its NATO allies into a wider fight against ISIS, and its supporters in the region."[218]

In the propaganda war on ISIS, the Saudis have a level of legitimacy with the Islamic community the West could not hope to equal. Saudi religious scholars and clerics are making the argument that ISIS and other radical al-Qaeda-like offshoots are not *salafi* at all—referring to the general term applied to Sunni fundamentalists. They argue that ISIS represents the deviant Islamic group known as the Kharijites. Since the seventh century, groups of militant Kharijites have attacked Muslims and others based on extremist, rigid and often shifting interpretations of Islam. It serves to separate ISIS, al-Qaeda, and those of a narrow terrorist ilk from the mainstream Sunni madhhabs, which includes the Hanbali School and its adherents like Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab.[219] As one astute observer of the region put it, "More importantly, the Saudi leadership has a unique form of religious credibility and legitimacy, which will make it far more effective than other governments at delegitimizing ISIS' monstrous terrorist ideology. The message sent to the Muslim and Arab worlds as Saudi Arabia takes on ISIS is radically different from — and much preferable to — the message sent if the United States does so, especially given America's recent disastrous record in the Middle East."[220]

King Abdullah: Stability in a Time of Transition and Reform

This analysis begins by going back to 2005 and the beginning of King Abdullah ibn Abd-al-Aziz's reign. The transition after his death in 2015 will be discussed in the epilogue. Abdullah's popularity was high, no doubt influenced by his conservative lifestyle and charisma.[221] But the real question in 2005 was how the King himself viewed his role within the context of Saudi political,

economic, and social development. Abdullah ascended the throne at age 79. He commanded the SNG [Saudi National Guard] for almost 50 years and for the past decade played the role as regent to King Fahd, whose health failed.

Given his age and his experience, one might assume that he saw his reign as an opportunity to prepare the Kingdom for the transfer of power from the sons of King Abd-al-Aziz to the next generation. But it is more than that. The King surrounded himself with some very bright people who are trying to look beyond the next few decades to what Saudi Arabia will be when it celebrates the bicentennial of Ibn Saud's establishment of the Third Saudi State. Critical changes must occur and Abdullah, with his reputation for personal conservatism and piety, may have the best chance of initiating those reforms without undermining the fundamental principles of the Saudi state. As one observer stated, "he is very straightforward, very honest and hates injustice … someone who in many ways is a throwback to that desert-warrior ethos where men stand by their word, they look each other straight in the eye and they apply a code of honor."[222] The eight years of Abdullah's rule points to a future where important political, economic, and social adjustments will be the order of the day.

One of Abdullah's earliest initiatives was institutionalizing the succession process and law. One of Abdullah's first acts as King was to issue "The Allegiance Commission Law" in October 2006. It established a legal framework for the succession and it was followed up by another set of by-laws in 2007. This framework provides the structure that will ultimately pass power from the sons to the grandsons of Ibn Saud. A 1992 law, created under King Fahd, limited the succession to the sons and grandsons of Ibn Saud but it did little to clarify the succession process among the progeny.

The law establishes the right of the King to appoint or remove the Crown Prince. The 2007 Allegiance Commission itself is composed of the sons of Abd-al-Aziz, or in the case of the death of one of the sons, the family offers three candidates from which the representative on the Commission is selected. The Allegiance Committee plays a key role in selecting any new Crown Prince as well as in determining whether or not a sitting monarch is still capable of executing his duties. Members of the committee serve for four years as long as they remain in good standing. It is a modern version of consensus selection of leaders, limited to one family, but with a very large pool of candidates.[223] It does not address every potential situation that might

arise in the succession process but it does provide a reasonably detailed framework designed to avoid conflicting claims.

In the long term, the economy is the greatest challenge for Saudi Arabia. The state's oil wealth will not be able to keep pace with the demands of a subsidized oil-based economy. Since 1980, the population has increased by over 300 percent and, in the next 15 years, it will grow by approximately 50 percent. The current system of subsidies for everything from individuals to industry is increasingly untenable. It is not just a matter of creating industries that can compete in the global market; it requires a transformation in the mindset of the population as a whole. The move from a subsidized economy to a true market economy will be a shock on society. The government's plan, currently underway, is to create new economic cities that will provide jobs and opportunities for the entire citizenry. Skeptics view this as impossible while the optimists hoping for entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) as boding well for the future. The patronage state and economy will have to change; either it will become more exclusive or it will become more rational and transparent. This is an enormous challenge.[224] No matter how the situation ultimately plays out, Saudi Arabia's enormous monetary reserves provides it with a buffer against instability and time to find a solution to its long-term economic challenges.

Reforms under Abdullah have also targeted the legal arena. As with other reforms, the Saudi approach is to go slow and judge the reaction to changes as they are implemented. In 2007, Abdullah initiated a series of judicial reforms. The Law of Judiciary, as it is called, reorganized the legal system by transferring the court-related prerogatives of the Ministry of Justice to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and forming a Supreme Court comprised of the nine heads of the Courts of Appeal. Previously, the Minister of Justice exercised oversight over the SJC; the law ended that practice, making the SJC more or less independent and giving it authority over the courts system. The ability of the Ministry of Justice to overrule the courts in certain instances was also ended. Judges now are required to have a formal legal education. The primary check on the SJC is that appointments and removal of judges is still done by royal decree with SJC advice.[225]

In 2009, the King removed the head of the SJC, Saleh al-Luhaidan. Luhaidan was an ultra-conservative judge that not only resisted the reforms, but also opposed the codification of Islamic law. In some areas, the reforms have brought remarkable improvements, particularly in the Court of

Grievances that handles cases involving foreigners and their investments. In other areas, legal rights advocates complain about the arbitrary decisions by judges in criminal cases and the interminable length of time required obtaining a decision in commercial disputes. Some cases can take 20 years. Still, for perhaps the most conservative of institutions in a very conservative society, the fact that reform is underway is remarkable in and of itself.[226]

Another area of social reform that Abdullah tackled is the legal status of women and their rights under Saudi law. The ban on women driving brings international criticism for the Kingdom. The driving ban leaves the impression that women in Saudi Arabia have no rights at all. As Lippman points out, "A century ago, young women in the United States confronted many of the same issues the young Saudi women do today."[227] Women's rights are an extremely sensitive issue in the Kingdom and the King has chosen to address it in a number of ways.

Another area of social reform that Abdullah tackled is the legal status of women and their rights under Saudi law.

Abdullah issued a royal degree that in 2015 women will be able to vote and run for office in municipal elections. He also appointed 30 women to the *Shura* council, the nearest thing in Saudi Arabia to a Majlis, or parliament, where they will sit and discuss the issues of state with male Council members. It is a balancing act between the necessity to change and the necessity for political stability. Some clerics have pronounced the female Shura Council members "whores" and "filth" but the reaction against these views has also been strong. The pace of change is going to be slow—careful deliberate change—creating a consensus—has enabled the Kingdom to survive and thrive. As the first female news anchor summed it up, "Always at the beginning of these things, there is a lot of hue and cry. But this will die down."[228] On the one hand, Abdullah, the consensus-oriented realist, counseled, "The development that we are working at must be gradual" and on the other hand, the reformer who has a grasp of the future states, "We refuse to marginalize women's role in Saudi society."[229]

Recent public opinion polls about identity in Saudi Arabia underscore the linkage between Islam and the state. When asked, what is the primary basis for government decisions: 32 percent said Islam; 27 percent said Saudi interests; 36 percent said what is best for Arabs; and 6 percent chose what is best for the world. With reference to what personally is the most important

identity: 47 percent say Islam, 19 percent say Saudi Arabia, and 34 percent say Arab.[230] These poll numbers indicate the linkage between Islam and the Saudi state is critical to legitimacy. For that reason, political, social, and economic reforms, as well as security policies that either emphasizes the Muslim or Saudi identity, must be managed slowly, deliberately, and through consensus building. In Saudi Arabia, the struggle over reform will continue. One such example is Sheikh Saad bin Nasser al-Shethri, who was relieved of his duties as a member of the Saudi *ulema* because he opposed men and women working together at the new science university on the Hejaz coast. Demoted, he continues to preach and there are those who listen. For this reason, change will come slowly.[231]

Abdullah's directness is one attribute that will serve Saudi Arabia well, particularly when dealing with the West. The King makes clear his position on a topic and carries with it a personal sense of justice that, once violated, has consequences. A case in point, Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to Abdullah's angry lecture directed at President George W. Bush over the plight of the Palestinians as a "near-death experience."[232] This straightforward approach to problems serves Saudi and U.S. interests well. Once Abdullah became convinced that "his subjects" had been a part of the 9/11 attacks, he prosecuted the war against al-Qaeda and other violent extremists with a vengeance. He disrupted their financing and, at the same time, he authorized a program that would attempt to bring them back into the fold through re-indoctrination. It is the U.S. partnership with Saudi Arabia, supported by Abdullah and his advisors that has contributed much to the destruction of terrorist networks and disrupted their operations.[233]

King Abdullah has also clearly demonstrated that he will act in the interests of the Kingdom no matter what official Washington thinks. Abdullah did it in Yemen regarding border security issues with the Zaydi Yemeni Huthis; he did it with regard to Bahrain; and he did it in Syria. The expressions of U.S.—Saudi solidarity also contain a persistent warning that the Kingdom will pursue its own interests. In a recent article by Dr. Imad Harb entitled, "The Return of Strong GCC-U.S. Relations," he concludes, "one thing will become increasingly obvious as the relationship develops and the partnership endures: the GCC will progressively assert a more independent course in the service of its interests, even if these dictate some disagreements with American policy preferences."[234] Harb's analysis of the GCC position reflects what has always been the position of Saudi Arabia. No matter what

the tensions, neither Saudi Arabia nor the United States have a viable substitute for the other and there is a long history of finding solutions to their differences and working through regional and global crises together.

Summary

Abdullah had been remarkably active in driving an increasingly complex Saudi agenda. No matter what happened during the years of his reign, like all reformers, some things were left undone, but Abdullah's accomplishments and initiatives as regent and monarch for two decades will be remembered in Saudi Arabia in terms similar to that of King Feisal's.

Abdullah played a pivotal role in the stability of the Kingdom since the 1950s and the power struggle between King Saud and then Crown Prince Feisal. His reputation for conservatism, reverence for the traditional ways of the Nejd, his piety, and eventually his position as commander of the Saudi National Guard with its ties to the Nejdi tribes has provided balance and credibility. His presence reassured more conservative elements in Saudi society that might have been reluctant to follow the lead of senior princes more openly aligned with the West.

As Crown Prince, Abdullah's regency after King Fahd's debilitating stroke in 1995 proved to be an important political transition. King Abdullah's longevity played a role in heading off potential disagreements about government structure in the future. King Abdullah's reputation as a conservative traditionalist has also allowed him to set precedents for future reform. It remains to be seen what will happen with the women's driving issue, but Abdullah's actions have pointed to the necessity of change—change at prescribed Saudi pace—but change nevertheless. Reform is another area in which King Abdullah shares attributes with King Feisal—both were able to tackle critical reform issues shielded by their personal piety and conservatism. As with King Feisal, King Abdullah, the conservative traditionalist, appears to have positioned the Kingdom to preserve its political, economic, and social character while moving along a stable path to a new twenty-first century reality—a Saudi Arabian reality.

6. Conclusion

The various Saudi states—the First (1744 to 1818), the Second (1824 to 1891), and finally the Third (1901 to the present) share certain attributes. The successes and the resiliency of all three states cannot be separated from the critical leadership provided by the al-Saud family and their embrace of the ideological glue provided by the reformist version of Islam propagated by Muhammad Abd-al-Wahhab. The best political leadership in all eras understood the critical linkages among social and economic environment, peoples, and the ideology. Wahhabi Islam and its simple unitarian approach to belief (*tawhid*) resonated with the tribal society of the Nejd—the right leadership, the right message, the right place, and the right time. Even after crushing defeats in 1818 and 1891, it was political leadership that allowed the Saudi state to regenerate and quickly return to a place of prominence in Arabia.

The First Saudi State was an astonishing explosion of conquest that by 1801 engulfed much of Arabia. However, the very essence of the explosion—the fervor of the Ikhwan raider—contained the seeds of its own demise. Unsophisticated political overreach resulted in the utter destruction of the state and everything that had been achieved since 1744. The First Saudi State attempted to rule Arabia by conquest without regard for the very real practical limitations of regional geopolitical power, and Ibrahim Pasha and his Egyptian armies destroyed it. Successful conquest, power, and influence rely as much or more on successful diplomacy and statecraft as they do on military prowess and war. The Saudi lesson learned is that overreach and *jihadi* fervor without the moderation of political control leads to disaster.

In some respects the Second Saudi State re-learned many of the lessons of the First. Its rulers refused to embrace the overreach of the First as exemplified by the Saudi rejection of the Qawasimi of Ras al-Khaimah's offer to resume its piracy and payment of the *zakat* under the Wahhabi banner. The Saudi leadership quickly made it clear that they wanted no problem with the new power in the Gulf—Great Britain. However, that state succumbed to a family feud fueled by tribal ambitions and rivalries, which offered an opening to regional rivals and outside powers to undermine the Second State and ultimately destroy it.

The genius of Ibn Saud was that he took these lessons to heart. He carefully took the territory that he could without provoking an Ottoman or British reaction. He focused on family unity and, for all the problems between Saud and Feisal, most of the senior princes understood that schisms within the family threatened the survival of all. Ibn Saud understood something else—without political control—the more radical elements in society would use the tenets of Wahhabi Islam to threaten the existence of the state from provoked outsiders or threaten the state from within through lack of discipline and dissent. Ibn Saud knew what needed to be done vis-à-vis the Ikhwan, but waited until his supporters and most of the population agreed before acting in 1929 and 1930. He then dealt with the problem of outside intervention by 'Great Powers' by allying Saudi Arabia with the United States. Through its ups and downs, the U.S.–Saudi Arabia relationship has served the strategic interests of both countries well.

In the current domestic environment, succession remains a looming issue. The relatively recent deaths of two Crown Princes, Sultan ibn Abd-al-Aziz and Nayef ibn Abd-al-Aziz, underscored the age of the first generation of Ibn Saud's progeny. With the Allegiance Council and a new succession law, significant speculation suggests that after Abdullah, the new king would come from the generation of the grandsons; however, the current alignment suggests something different. Crown Prince Salman ibn Abd-al-Aziz, one of the Sudairi Seven, is the presumptive successor, and now Prince Muqrin ibn Abd-al-Aziz has been promoted to Second Deputy Prime Minister. This is usually the stepping stone to the position of Crown Prince.[235]

In the past, this would mean that on the death of King Abdullah, the Crown Prince and Prince Muqrin would move up in the chain of succession. Such an approach would certainly confirm the historic practice of the throne moving from one brother to the next and after Muqrin to the grandsons. The new succession law and the role of the Allegiance Council could change this and push the succession to the next generation, but this appears unlikely. If the current arrangements reflect Abdullah's wishes for succession, then it is most likely to follow what appears to be the obvious course. This entire approach is predicated on avoiding the succession problems that destroyed the Second Saudi State and threatened Saudi Arabia in the 1950s and 1960s. While mortality is unpredictable, Muqrin's place in the succession in all likelihood delays the transfer of power to the grandsons for as much as a decade. During that period, selection of a crown prince should indicate the

pecking order among the grandsons. At this point, one of the most prominent in that group is Prince Muhammad bin Nayef bin Abd-al-Aziz, the Minister of Interior.[236]

From an external security perspective, Saudi Arabia faces the continued threat of Shi'a Iran and Iraq and the potential for instability in Yemen spilling across the border in the south. Prior to the destruction of Saddamist Iraq, a prominent security analyst stated, "The main strategic challenge Saudi Arabia faces is the need to plan for its forces to deal with its two major threats in the Northern Gulf, plus a residual threat in the south from Yemen."[237] The situation has changed—Iran and Iraq are now allies, but in many respects it is the same historic threat from the north faced by Ibn Saud in the 1920s.

The strategic importance of the U.S.–Saudi Arabia strategic defense and security relationship remains intact. U.S. security guarantees are more critical than ever given the Iranian nuclear program and Iranian cooption of the Maliki government in Baghdad. At the same time, Riyadh will keep its options open when it comes to regional policy. While Saudi Arabia believes that U.S. policy often ignores the interests of the Kingdom, the overall relationship continues to be a cornerstone of Saudi security. The Kingdom will continue to pursue bilateral agreements that firmly tie the U.S. to the Saudi defense while pressuring Washington to maintain the diplomatic and military pressure on Iran. In 2008, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia concluded an agreement on security that committed Washington to provide security for and defend Saudi Arabia and its infrastructure.[238] In 2013, the U.S. government organized an entire trade mission focused on critical infrastructure protection and cyber security in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.[239] Although not specifically stated, the implication of the agreements is that an attack on Saudi facilities is virtually tantamount to an attack on the United States.

Behind this shield, the Saudis are free to pursue more aggressive strategies than they otherwise might. They have supported the opposition to Syrian President Bashir Assad and ignored Iranian, Iraqi, and Russian criticism.[240] As the Saudis develop an operational concept for their new border security efforts, in-depth security will become a more prominent aspect of the overall approach.[241] The security relationship with the U.S. also has its frustrations. Saudi Arabia would like the GCC to create a multilateral defense force. The Kingdom would clearly be the dominant partner, and Riyadh and many western analysts would view this generally as a positive policy development. However, while the U.S. has embraced the idea of collective security through

the GCC, it continues to expand its security relations with the emirates through bilateral security arrangements.

The U.S. finds itself in the ambiguous position of advocating more Gulf cooperation while providing bilateral relationships that allow the Gulf emirates to maintain their independence—as one U.S. diplomat called it—"multilateral bilateralism."[242] Riyadh would like to see a single organization with a single voice on security issues for the Gulf. That voice could be any individual from any of the Gulf States as long as the policy positions agree with those held in Riyadh. The problem is that the smaller states of the Gulf, particularly the southern Gulf States of Qatar, Oman, and the UAE, are uncomfortable with the idea of an integrated GCC military force in general, and one in which Saudi Arabia was the dominant partner, in particular. This undermines the Saudi desire to see the defense of the Gulf integrated under a central Arab command.

With regard to internal Arab security issues, the cooperation is much closer. From Riyadh's perspective, they are very concerned that periodic U.S. pressure or encouragement to liberalize Gulf political institutions might actually undermine the Arab leadership in the region. The Saudis believe that, in consultation with the Gulf emirates, they are a better source of advice and more reliable in the event of internal problems in one of the emirates. These concerns particularly apply to Bahrain, where the Saudis believe that U.S. encouragement for "democratic reforms" and Bahraini political liberalization would threaten Khalifa rule. From a security point of view, problems in Bahrain, because of its large Shi'a population and history of Persian and Iranian claims, have direct implications for the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia with their large Shi'a population.

In other areas, U.S. bilateral relations with the emirates encourage and support the emirates' ability to pursue independent policies in other areas with which the Saudis disagree. Social policies in the Gulf emirates have put significant pressure on the Saudi government to follow suit. There are no driving bans and few official prohibitions against women in the workplace or restrictions on "reasonable" forms of public dress. In this regard, the *Al-Jazeera* news operating from Qatar has become an aggravation for the Saudi Arabian government with its exposes and commentary, particularly on social issues. The government in Riyadh believes that, given what they view as the magnitude of the Iranian threat, the expansion of Iranian influence, and now the radical Islamist threat posed by ISIS, the Arab Gulf states need

to coalesce into a much more cohesive and conservative political, military, and diplomatic front. For the emirates, they are much more comfortable with balancing Arab cooperation and the protection of an external power like the United States, i.e., a modified British model that does not interfere in internal affairs.

In the future, combating extremism and terrorism will feature a more nuanced approach in the Kingdom. Stability first and foremost is the responsibility of the Saudi government. Saudi authorities underestimated the depth and breadth of the radical movement and its potential for causing political, economic, and social instability while undermining Saudi influence and relationships abroad. The tendency on the part of the intelligence services and security officials was to downplay potential problems.[243] A consensus finally emerged, but it took four or five years and hundreds of casualties for Saudi security forces to get a handle on the problem. Clearly, the Arabian Gulf has entered another period of prolonged instability largely driven by Iranian ambitions on the one hand and Sunni extremist groups on the other.

In the future, combating extremism and terrorism will feature a more nuanced approach in the Kingdom.

Saudi ambitions and perceptions of the Kingdom's interests extend well beyond its current borders. In the immediate future significant investment will be made in upgrading border security, port security, training of special security forces, air transport security, petroleum infrastructure security, and less tangible, but no less important, aspects of internal security operations. The large-scale security infrastructure improvement tasks will be spread between European and American firms. Those tendered by the Saudi Arabian government directly will likely go to European firms; others will be designated in special bilateral agreements as U.S. projects.

At the same time, the government is being very innovative in its approach to terrorism by utilizing a prevention, rehabilitation, and after care (PRAC) strategy. PRAC was a special project headed by the Minister of Interior (MOI), Prince Muhammad bin Nayef. By coordinating with several other agencies and foundations, the MOI is driving a campaign against the "ideological infrastructure that supports and breeds violent Islamic extremists." It derives much of its approach from Saudi societal traditions that emphasize "co-optation and persuasion."[244] Saudi officials claim "an 80 to 90 percent

success rate" with 1,400 being released from the program and only a few dozen being rearrested for security-related offensives. The program is promising.[245] The focus and support of the most senior levels of government has made a real difference not only in the successful prosecution of both coercive and persuasive approaches but also in the creativity being applied to a very complex problem. Whether or not the program is uniformly successful, it has a critical second purpose as well. It demonstrates to the general public that the state is making a bona fide effort to rehabilitate those who have strayed into radicalism and not just eliminate or imprison them. This increases government credibility.

An extended security posture represents another aspect of this security effort. The Saudi government has a long history of dealing with porous insecure borders, and over the years, they have developed their own methodology that can be very effective. Tribal societies prize their independence, and Saudi security and intelligence forces have learned how to use that independence to advantage, particularly in areas where neighboring government control is weak. The strategy is to create a security screen of tribal allies as the first line of defense outside Saudi's own national boundaries with the intent of stopping, diluting, or getting forewarning vis-à-vis any potential threats. Such an approach contains risks, but the risks of not being aggressive about border security are even greater.

The Kingdom faces any number of challenges in the future, but it currently has the resources and the mechanisms in place to deal with them. The Saudis are working to address potential future petroleum related issues. Saudi ARAMCO and Shell have entered into a joint venture and are in the process of investing $10 billion in the expansion of an oil refinery in Port Arthur, Texas, designed to handle Saudi heavy crude. With new technologies increasing petroleum production globally, the new facility will assure the Kingdom a place in the U.S. market for the foreseeable future.[246] At the November 2014 meeting of OPEC, Saudi Arabia supported continuing oil production at the current levels despite a dramatic fall in oil prices. This policy demonstrates the multidimensional nature of Saudi energy policy. On one hand, the drop in oil prices has been attributed to Riyadh's desire to undermine the explosion of oil production in the U.S. brought on by new technology, so-called "fracking." Lower prices make it less economical to pursue new exploration that potentially threatens Saudi dominance. On the other hand, the Saudi contribution to falling prices aids sanctions against

Russia and Iran and undermines regimes like the leftist government in Venezuela. The drop in oil revenue has done far more damage to Russia than any sanctions could possibly do and some speculate that it is designed to punish Iran and Russia for their support for the Assad regime in Syria.[247] The Kingdom's actions at OPEC meetings can directly affect the global energy market and is a sign of just how important Saudi Arabia is to global stability and economic security.

Saudi survival, however, is not just about oil. Before the oil wealth, three Saudi states managed to dominate Arabia and much of the Gulf for two centuries. In an environment that embraced the al-Saud and Wahhabi Islam, Saudi Arabia survived multiple catastrophes and enjoyed the benefits from the discovery of oil. The al-Saud and their embrace of Wahhabi Islam provided the political and ideological muscle to establish a state, regenerate a state, perpetuate a state, and finally to prosper in the most unstable region in the world. The Kingdom will continue to embrace the Hanbali *madhhab* of Sunni Islam in the *salafist* form espoused by the eighteenth century reform movement led by Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab; it will also oppose extremist Islamic groups like ISIS just as it opposed the extremism of radical Ikhwan in the 1920s. For the Kingdom, the first priority is stability and security followed closely by preserving the conservative values of its traditional society while embracing modernity.

For SOF, a better-informed perspective on Saudi Arabia has become increasingly critical. The strategic interests of the Kingdom and the United States remain unchanged but there is a growing view in the Arabian Gulf that the U.S. pursues policies that are injurious to both Western and Arab Gulf interests. Saudi Arabia's initial refusal to accept a seat on the United Nations Security Council in October 2013 was aimed less at the United Nations (U.N.) and more to make a point with the United States. Riyadh and its regional GCC partners believe that Washington has increasingly exhibited insensitivity to Arab Gulf interests and are deeply suspicious of "talks" with Iran and the U.S. reluctance to commit itself to the removal of the Assad regime in Syria. There is a recalibration of relations underway in Riyadh that may in fact result in a return to the more quid pro quo based policies of the King Feisal ibn Abd-al-Aziz era (r. 1964-1975).[248] Saudi and Gulf state frustrations are clear but what they actually mean in terms of U.S.-Saudi relations will take shape over the next several years.

Notwithstanding the problems and challenges, cooperation between U.S. and Saudi SOF and security organizations is likely to continue and intensify. A better-informed U.S. SOF on Saudi Arabia and its historical context, the better it is able to assist an important ally in achieving mutual security goals. U.S. SOF efforts may well serve as the glue that preserves and enhances the strategic relationship at institutional and personal levels during a period that may in fact be one of the most strained and challenging in the last two decades. Identifying common interests and pursuing them is important, but understanding and accepting differences even in times of disagreement is critical—it requires an understanding of a different political, economic, social, and cultural context that is fundamental to the SOF mission.

7. Epilogue

On 23 January 2015, King Abdullah ibn Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud died in Riyadh and Crown Prince Salman ibn Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud became king.[249] In an orderly fashion, the succession at the most senior levels followed King Abdullah's agreement with King Salman, including the selection of the successor, who will in all likelihood be the first grandson of Ibn Saud to take the throne. Prior to his death, King Abdullah had, in consultation with Crown Prince Salman ibn Abd-al-Aziz, thought through the issues of succession including the all-important transition to the next generation—the grandsons. In this monograph, the earlier analysis argued Prince Muqrin would follow King Salman as Crown Prince and be the last son of Ibn Saud to wear the crown. Initially, that is exactly what happened, but now King Salman has decided to accelerate the move to the next generation as well as modernizing the function of the Saudi government.

Figure 9. President Barack Obama talks with Saudi Arabia's King Salman ibn Abd-al-Aziz al-Saud after arriving in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 27 January 2015, just four days after King Abdullah ibn Abd-al-Aziz's death. Obama cut short his visit to India to be able to visit Saudi Arabia to offer his condolences and discuss key regional and international topics. Photo used by permission of Newscom.

In asserting his control, King Salman moved quickly to designate his selections for key

ministerial positions. There is speculation that King Salman, a Sudairi, defied King Abdullah's wishes in appointing Muhammad bin Nayef as third in line. Some argue that King Abdullah wanted to eliminate the Sudairis from positions of influence, but this logic defies historical context and the dynamic under King Abdullah and now King Salman. King Abdullah made Muhammad bin Nayef the first of the next generation to become a full minister, overseeing the critical Ministry of Interior. As Minister of Defense and now as King, Salman removed the Sudairi sons of Prince Sultan ibn Abd-al-Aziz from key government positions. These moves reflect King Salman's reputation as a hardworking pragmatist.

By making Prince Muqrin, the former Chief of the General Intelligence Directorate, the Second Deputy Prime Minister and placing him in line to become Crown Prince, Abdullah displayed his shrewd grasp of family politics. In remolding the government for the challenges ahead, King Salman has now removed Muqrin as Crown Prince and Muhammad bin Nayef has taken his place as first in line for the throne.

The most interesting development is that Salman has placed his son, Muhammad bin Salman, the new Minister of Defense, as next in line behind Muhammad bin Nayef. Both princes are well-known for their pro-Western views and for their commitment to the Kingdom's stability in face of radical Islamic elements, foreign adversaries particularly Iran, and pursuing Saudi interests by confronting their enemies and subtly pressuring their friends. Given that Muhammad bin Nayef is in his mid-50s and Muhammad bin Salman his mid-30s, the appointment sets Saudi succession for the next three to four decades, barring the unforeseen.

The resignation of the long-time Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud bin Feisal bin Abd-al-Aziz and his replacement by Adel al-Jubeir, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, reflects the "pro-Western" image of King Salman. The Saudi foreign policy and security team support the Kingdom's alliances with the West, and they have a history of close cooperation with the United States. The government will support western policies only if they coincide with the interests of the Kingdom. The leadership will challenge U.S. policy when it undermines or threatens those interests and they will use their sophisticated grasp of western policy and politics to pursue those interests. Western policymakers can expect more assertive and sophisticated policy emanating out of Riyadh. In addition, any economic and social changes that

occur within Saudi Arabia will reflect Saudi requirements not western ideas about the efficacy of democracy and society in the Kingdom.

In calling for a Sunni League to confront ISIS and Iran, in taking the initiative in attempting to force a compromise in Yemen that excludes Iranian influence, while pushing for a compromise over the Muslim Brotherhood, King Salman anticipates that Arab states might need to proceed without the United States.[250] On 4 November 2013, on the occasion of Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to the Kingdom, the former Saudi Foreign Minister Saud bin Feisal bin Abd-al-Aziz stated, "A true relationship between friends is based on sincerity, candor, and frankness rather than mere courtesy. Within this perspective, it's only natural that our policies and views might see agreement in some areas and disagreement in others."[251] This statement continues to be reiterated at all levels of the Saudi government in word and deed. Despite the risks, many in the Saudi government and military have long supported a more assertive Saudi Arabia and despite the risks, welcome King Salman's determination to confront the Kingdom's foreign and domestic challenges.

Endnotes

1. Although something of an oversimplification, a good case could be made that all of the current Arab states of the Gulf—or at least the ruling families—had their origins in the upheavals of the eighteenth century. As the "Gunpowder" empires—the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal—collapsed or declined, peripheral areas of the empire exerted their independence. These shifts in political power were accompanied by social and economic changes that served as catalysts for further political change. In virtually every case, the changes constituted either the disposition of a ruling group or the assertion of an existing tribe or clan of its preeminent role over an existing political, economic, and social structure. For example, the al-Sabah and al-Khalifa jointly displaced first the local ruling structure in Kuwait and then that of Bahrain and western Qatar. The Bani Yas of Abu Dhabi had been the dominant tribal group for some time, but the discovery of water on Abu Dhabi Island allowed them to relocate their political center to the coast and assert themselves as a Gulf power in a way that previously had not been possible. In Oman, the Sultanate and Imamate had existed in an uneasy equilibrium punctuated by outside attempts to conquer and subjugate both. The eighteenth century brought the emergence of the Al Bu Said dynasty whose leadership played a key role in ejecting the Persian overlords of Nadir Shah and installing themselves as the Sultans of the coast. Even in Yemen, the Zaydi Imamate, albeit with its lack of political control and flair for instability and localized rule, had existed for centuries. What happened in Arabia in the mid-eighteenth century was something quite different. What emerged in the Nejd Desert of Arabia in 1744 had an ideological component and political arrangement that more resembled that of an early modern European state than anything in the Middle East or South Asia. For a narrative on Gulf historical development and additional bibliographic references see, Roby C. Barrett, *The Arabian Gulf and Security Policy: Past as Present – Present as Future* (Tampa, Florida: Joint Special Operations University – JSOU Report April 2009).
2. While the term 'Wahhabi Islam' is technically imprecise, for reasons of stylistic simplification it will be used to describe the 18th Islamic reform movement within the Hanbali *madhhab*, or school of Sunni Islam, led by Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab (1703-1792). The term Wahhabism is simply so inaccurate that it will not be used. One could in fact argue that the use of "Wahhabism" is a political attempt to vilify Wahhabi Islam by identifying Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab's Islamic reform movement and its adherents with the entirely western creations of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism. Whatever else, good or bad, might be said about Wahhabi Islam, its philosophy and origins have absolutely no relationship to those of the modern western 'isms' that resulted in a series of twentieth century cataclysms that cost over 100 million lives.
3. Nick Cunningham, "The World's 5 Most Important Oil Fields," *Economic Policy Journal* (12 June 2014), http://www.economicpolicyjournal.com/2014/06/

the-worlds-five-most-important-oil.html. The two fields in Saudi Arabia are Ghawar and Safaniya. The other three fields are Rumaila and West-Qurna 2 in Iraq, and Burgan in Kuwait.

4. Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman Press, 1994), 17-18.
5. Ulrich Haarmann, *Geshichte Der Arabischen Welt* (Munich: C.H. Beck 1987), 52-57.
6. L.W. Adamec, *Islam, A Historical Companion* (Stroud, U.K.: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2007), 264. *Umma* or *Ummah* refers to the entire community of believers in Islam wherever they may reside. Obviously when discussing the earliest periods the community was relatively small and centered on Mecca and Medina. The great conquests of the seventh century brought significant and rapid expansion.
7. Kennedy, *Age of the Caliphates*, 57-74.
8. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume I, The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 214.
9. John Esposito, Editor, *The Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-18.
10. Kennedy, *Age of the Caliphates*, 99-100.
11. Ibid., 118-119.
12. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 274-284.
13. Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 70-71.
14. Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: A History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 102-118.
15. David Morgan, *Medieval Persia 1040-1797* (London: Longman Press, 1994), 116-118.
16. Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume 1, Empire of the Gazis and the Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 84-85.
17. Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (London: Pearson/Longman Press, 2008), 41-45, 75.
18. Gerald de Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1950), 142-144. This section contains a description of the visit of an advisor to the Sultan and his murder by a local Arab tribesman. It states that at the time "the Sherif was far away in Nejd, at Al Kharj." The nominal authority of the Sharif did not extend to Al-Kharj but apparently his official duties took him into central Arabia as well the coastal areas.
19. Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14.

20. Sir Arnold T. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf: An Historical Sketch from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (London: George Allen & Unwind, Ltd., 1954), 122-127.
21. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 14.
22. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso Books, 2006), 160.
23. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume 3, The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 107, 109.
24. Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*, 113.
25. Adamec, *Islam, A Historical Companion*, 235. See also, Douglas E. Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2011), 27.
26. Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*, 114.
27. Dilip Hiro, *The Essential Middle East: A Comprehensive Guide* (New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, 2003), 478.
28. Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*, 114.
29. Adamec, *Islam, A Historical Companion*, 235.
30. Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*, 114.
31. Ibid., 290.
32. P.M. Holt, Editor, *The Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 2B, Islamic Society and Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 635-636.
33. Holt, *History of Islam*, 637.
34. Adamec, *Islam, A Historical Companion*, 30.
35. David E. Long, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Gainesville, Florida: The University of Florida Press, 1997), 23.
36. Adamec, *Islam, A Historical Companion*, 30.
37. Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18.
38. Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*, 114.
39. Holt, *History of Islam*, 638.
40. Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*, 518.
41. Lapidus, *Islamic Societies*, 673-674.
42. David E. Long, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1997), 24.
43. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 16-17.
44. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 35-38.
45. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 19.
46. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 39.

47. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 21.
48. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, 197-198. By virtue of their victory in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Britain gained control of the Indian subcontinent. India became the 'jewel in the crown of the Empire' and the trade routes to England had to be protected. Piracy originating in the Arabian Gulf was a serious problem and the British began to move into the Gulf to contain it. Thus from 1763 forward, British involvement in the Gulf grew until they finally imposed a maritime peace on the region beginning in 1819.
49. J.E. Peterson, *Historical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia* (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), 7.
50. Finkel, *Osman*, 412.
51. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, 198.
52. Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2009), 588.
53. J.B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, 1795-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 228-230.
54. Kelly, *Persian Gulf*, 233-235.
55. Bombay Selection XXIV, 442, Lieutenant A.B. Kemball, "Historical Sketch of the Wahabee Tribe of Arabs, 1832-1844," in Kelly, *Persian Gulf*, 244.
56. Kelly, *Persian Gulf*, 246.
57. J.B. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 227.
58. Kelly, *Persian Gulf*, 399-402.
59. Ibid., 510-518.
60. Ibid., 642.
61. Long, *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 26-28.
62. Robert Lacy, *The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Saud* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, 1981), 36.
63. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 23.
64. Daryl Champion, *The Paradoxical Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Momentum of Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 10-15.
65. Ibid., 21.
66. Donald Quartaert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 1700-1923 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 51.
67. Kelly, *Persian Gulf*, 718.
68. Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: the Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 68.
69. David Holden and Richard Johns, *The House of Saud: The Rise and Rule of the Most Powerful Dynasty in the Arab World* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), 25.

70. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 29.
71. Abd-al-Reda, *Kuwait's Foreign Policy: City-State in World Politics* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990), 4.
72. Rosemary Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States* (Reading, U.K.: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1998), 35.
73. Ahmad Mustafa Abu Hakima, *The Modern History of Kuwait, 1750-1965* (London: Luzac & Company Limited, 1983), 112-114.
74. Ameen Rihani, *Maker of Modern Arabia* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), 57. Rihani's book is interesting in several ways. It relates his journeys through the Nejd in the 1920s, but it also includes his description of meetings with Gertrude Bell in Baghdad. He relates that Bell showed little interest in talking about Arabia but was instead focused on the Hashemites and Iraq.
75. Champion, *The Paradoxical Kingdom*, 37.
76. Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 34-35.
77. Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire*, 1908-1918 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 140.
78. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 36.
79. Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Kingmakers: The Invention of the Modern Middle East* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 240.
80. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 37-39.
81. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East*, 1914-1922 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 424-426.
82. Ibid.
83. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 42-43.
84. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 424-426.
85. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 44.
86. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 426.
87. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 46.
88. Christopher Catherwood, *Churchill's Folly: How Winston Churchill Created Modern Iraq* (New York: Carroll & Graff, 2004), 222.
89. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 47-49.
90. Glen Balfour-Paul, "Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century*, edited by Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 500.
91. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 46.
92. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 49.
93. Kelly, *Arabia*, 237.

94. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 50.
95. David Howarth, *The Desert King Ibn Saud and his Arabia* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 168.
96. Ibid., 168.
97. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 55.
98. Howarth, *Desert King Ibn Saud*, 224-226. Crane was well known for co-chairing Woodrow Wilson's attempt to allow for self-determination in the Middle East following the First World War. Crane was the wealthy heir to the Crane plumbing fortune. He and Henry Churchill King toured the region and made recommendations to Wilson for a U.S. mandate over the region. He opposed Zionism and distrusted the British and French colonial missions. Allegedly, during the commission tour, he had been shot at and missed by Ikhwan tribesmen in the Nejd. Crane was so disappointed in the lack of real knowledge displayed by the Americans at the Paris Peace Conference that he established a series of fellowships for study abroad including at the British India Civil Servant school.
99. Mohammed Almana, *Arabia Unified: A Portrait of Ibn Saud* (London: Hutchinson Benham, 1980), 220-221.
100. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 60.
101. Ibid., 61.
102. "Diary Entry by President Eisenhower concerning a conversation with British Prime Minister Churchill, 6 January 1953," DDEL, AWF, AW Diary Series, Box 9, 6-7.
103. P.S. Allfree, *Warlords of Oman* (London: Robert Hale, 1967), 14-17.
104. Senior UAE military officer knowledgeable about tribal issues. He added that the credit for healing the breach between the tribes and the Emirates following the British expulsion of the Saudis from Buraimi was due to the intelligence of Sheikh Zayid bin Sultan al-Nahayan (1918-2004) of Abu Dhabi and the respect with which he was viewed by the interior tribes. He described the Sheikh as "a wonderful man."
105. Majid Al-Khalili, *Oman's Foreign Policy: Foundation and Practice* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2009), 24.
106. J.E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London: SAQI, 2007), 54-55.
107. "Brief, 18 April 1953," PRO, FO371/104294, EA1081/518.
108. "Briefing Paper from the Eastern Department/Arabia: The Sultan of Muscat and the Interior of Oman, 1 May 1953," PRO, FO371-104294, EA1081/519/G.
109. "Minute Discussing the Sultan's attitude toward the HUQF Project, 26 January 1954," PRO, FO371/109829, EA1081/49. See also, "Telegram from FO to the British Residency Bahrain, No. 91, 27 January 1954," PRO, FO371/109829.
110. Francis Owtram, *A Modern History of Oman: Formation of the State since 1920* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 91.

111. "Dispatch from the British Residency Bahrain to the FO/Eastern Department (Fry) on Saudi Activities, 26 October 1954," PRO, FO371/114613, EA1081/603.
112. "Dispatch from the British Residency Bahrain to the FO on Oman and the Arab League, 1 April 1955," PRO, FO371/114578, EA1015/S. In "Telegram from Bahrain to the FO on the Arab League Issue, No. 2, 18 January 1955," PRO FO371/114578, EA1015/8.
113. "Telegram from FO to Berlin on Saudi Arabia Frontier Dispute, No. 179, 11 February 1954," PRO, FO371/109829, EA1087/80.
114. Allfree, *Warlords of Oman*, 21-25.
115. "Telegram from Bahrain to the FO on Buraimi situation, No. 766, 27 October 1955," PRO, FO371/114623, EA1081/336.
116. "Telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office Prime Minister Eden's speech, No. 270, 26 October 1955, PRO, FO371/114623.
117. "Telegram British Embassy Jidda to the FO Saudi position on Buraimi, No. 290, 28 October 1955," PRO FO371/114578, EA1081/357.
118. William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1984). This is the most comprehensive work on British policy in the post-war era and the increasing friction between U.S. views and the British. Focusing on the Socialist government of Clement Attlee, Louis points out that the British desire to maintain its empire did not end with the Socialist but merely took on another form namely "informal empire."
119. For a more detailed but condensed explanation of the Buraimi crisis and its regional effect, see Roby C. Barrett, *Oman: The Present in the Context of a Fractured Past* (Tampa, Florida: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2011).
120. "The Arab 'Summit': Nasser and the Kings," Newsweek 4 March 1957: 40. "Minute by G. Lucas, Foreign Office on letter from Sir Charles Johnston Amman, 8 April 1958," PRO, FO371/133147.
121. "Memorandum from NEA (Lampton) to the Secretary of State (Dulles), 7 February 1958," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1955-1959, 611.86B/2-758 (Box 2555): 2-3.
122. "FO Minutes on Syrian Situation, 28 January 1958," PRO, FO371/134386.
123. "Telegram from the Department of State (Dulles) to the Embassy in Iraq, 8 February 1958," *FRUS, 1958-1960, Arab-Israeli Dispute*, Volume XIII: 420.
124. "Letter from Sir Charles Johnston Amman to the Foreign Office, 8 April 1958," PRO, FO371/133147.
125. Nutting, *Nasser*, 227.
126. "Letter from Sir Charles Johnston Amman to the Foreign Office, 8 April 1958," PRO, FO371/133147. "Between Thunder and Sun," *Time*, 31 March 1958: 18.'"
127. "Letter from Sir Charles Johnston Amman to the Foreign Office, 8 April 1958," PRO, FO371/133147. "Between Thunder and Sun," *Time*, 31 March 1958: 18.'"

128. "Minute by G. Lucas, Foreign Office on letter from Sir Charles Johnston Amman, 8 April 1958," PRO, FO371/133147.

129. "Minute by G. Lucas, Foreign Office attached to Telegram from Beirut to the Foreign Office on Feisal policy statement, 21 April 1958," PRO, FO371/133146. "Minute by D.M.H. Riches attached to an assessment: The Middle East and Communism, 29 January 1958," PRO, FO371/133146.

130. "Telegram from the British Embassy Amman (Johnston) to FO (R. Stevens), 16 September 1959," No. 780, PRO, FO371/142131: 1.

131. "Annual Political Report on Saudi Arabia 1959 from Indian Embassy Jidda (M.K. Kidwai) to MEA New Delhi and Prime Minister (Nehru), 12 October 1960," INA, MEA, 15-A (9) WANA/60: 4.

132. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 264.

133. "Discussion at the 358th Meeting of the NSC, 13 March 1958," DDEL, PPDDE, AWF, NSC Series, Box 9: 13.

134. "Discussion at the 358th Meeting of the NSC," 13. On January 5, 1957, Eisenhower made a speech before Congress in which he described a "power vacuum" in the Middle East and offered U.S. military assistance to any country in the region that was threaten by another. Nasser and the Arab nationalists ridiculed it.

135. "Telegram from British Embassy WDC (Benest) to the FO (Walmsley), 23 May 1958," PRO, FO371/133149.

136. Lacy, *The Kingdom*, 338.

137. "NIE: The Outlook for Saudi Arabia, 19 April 1960," *FRUS, 1958-1960, Near East Region*, Volume XII, 759.

138. "Telegram from US Embassy Jidda (Heath) to WDC, 25 July 1958," *FRUS, 1958-1960, Near East Region*, Volume XII, 730-732.

139. The term 'Sudairi Seven' refers to the seven full-brothers and sons of Ibn Saud by one of his most influential wives Hassa bint Ahmad al-Sudairi. The al-Sudairi were a large, powerful Nejdi tribal clan critical to Ibn Saud's consolidation of power. The sons were also referred to as the al-Fahd, after the eldest of the brothers, Fahd ibn Abd-al-Aziz, who was King form 1982-2005. At times resented by other members of the family for their power and influence, they formed a solid core on which Feisal and the Kingdom could rely. Holden and Johns, *House of Saud*, 268-269. Ibn Saud's mother was an al-Sudairi, Sara bint Ahmed al Kabir al-Sudairi and King Feisal's first wife was Sultana bint Ahmed al-Sudairi. Gerald de Gaury, *Faisal: King of Saudi Arabia* (London: Arthur Barker Limited, 1966), 52-53. See also, Joseph A. Kechichian, *Faysal: Saudi Arabia's King for All Seasons* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 2008), 75-76.

140. Oral History – John S. Badeau, Ambassador to the United Arab Republic, JFKL, Interviewed by Dennis O'Brien in New York City on 25 February 1969: 24-25. Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations, The Amorality of Power Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), 214-218. Copeland's account of various reactions

to the Eisenhower Doctrine is one of the more entertaining. First, he quoted a member of the U.S. Middle East Policy Planning Committee asking the CIA, "Would you fellows like to send someone along on the mission that's going out to explain it to the Arab chiefs of state? We can't afford to associate ourselves with every lunatic scheme that comes along." He quotes Nasser as saying, "The genius of you Americans is that you never make clear-cut stupid moves, only complicated stupid moves which make us wonder at the possibility that there may be something to them we are missing." Complicated or not, Copeland points out that Nasser understood that the Doctrine did not bode well for his view of Arab unity or his ascendancy in the region. It encouraged his sworn enemies, chief among them Nuri Sa'id and the Hashemites in Iraq. The term "wave of the future" became synonymous with Nasser and widely used. In interviews with Phillips Talbot, General Andrew Goodpaster, William "Bill" Lakeland and Walt Rostow, each used the term at one point or another to describe the US evaluation of Nasser and the Nasserist wave that seemed to be sweeping the Arab Middle East.

141. Duff Hart-Davis, *The War that Never Was: The true story of the men who fought Britain's most secret battle* (London: Century, 2011), 35-56. By 1963, the British had a team of military advisors in Yemen supporting the Royalists in what would turn into Nasser's Vietnam. This is an excellent account of the British efforts during the Yemen Civil War. It is also a reminder that Yemen has never and likely will never function as a national state, and a cautionary note for any who would presume to fight and win an unconventional war in Yemen.

142. "Memorandum from Komer to the President, 4 October 1962," John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL), Presidential Papers of John F. Kennedy (PPJFK), National Security File (NSF) NSF, SAGF, Box 157:1-2. See also "Memorandum from William Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, October 1, 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157: 1.

143. "Memorandum from Komer to the President, 4 October 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, Feisal Briefing Book, Box 157A: 1.

144. "Memorandum of Conversation between Crown Prince Feisal of Saudi Arabia and President Kennedy, October 5, 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157: 1-4.

145. "Memorandum entitled Discussion: UAR – Saudi Relations, October 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157A: 1.

146. "Telegram from the Department of State to Jidda and London, October 6, 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157: 2.

147. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 95.

148. Holden and Johns, *The House of Saud*, 227. Prince Tallal, either on 17 October or the following day, renounced his royal title in protest. On 23 October he called for a "revolt" in favor of a "national democratic government," proclaiming the current government was "steeped in backwardness, underdevelopment, reactionary individuals and tyranny."

149. "Telegram from US Embassy Cairo (Badeau) to WDC, 18 October 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786a.00/10-1862: 2.
150. "Telegram from US Mission to the UN (Stevenson) to WDC, 18 October 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786a.00/10-1862: 1-2.
151. "Telegram from US Embassy Jidda to WDC, 22 October 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 611.86h/10-22-62, (M-1855, 59/250/3/27/4): 1.
152. "Telegram from US Consulate General Taiz to WDC, 9 November 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786h.00/11-762, (M-1855, 59/250/3/27/4): 1.
153. "Telegram from WDC to US Consulate General Taiz, 9 November 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 686B.86H/11-762, (M-1855, 59/250/3/27/4): 1.
154. "Airgram from US Embassy Jidda (Hart) to WDC, 6 November 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786a.00/11-662: 2.
155. "Memorandum from Rusk to President Kennedy on Recognition of YAR, 12 November 1961," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 611.86H/11-1262, (M-1855, 59/250/3/27/4): 1.
156. "Telegram from the FO to British Embassy WDC – Macmillan to Kennedy Personal, 14 November 1962," No. 8199, PRO, CO1015/2153: 1, 2.
157. "Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Parker T. Hart, Jidda, and Dr. Rashad Fir'awn, Advisor to Crown Prince Feisal, 3 November 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157: 1-3. See also, "Telegram from US Embassy Jidda (Hart) to WDC, 15 November 1962," JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157: 1. The SAG published a new series of laws and reforms, perhaps the most sweeping in history. See also, "Airgram from US Embassy Jidda (Thatcher) to WDC, 8 November 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 59-786a.00/11-862: 1.
158. "Telegram from US Embassy Jidda (Hart) to WDC, 30 December 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786h.00/12-3062: 1.
159. "Memorandum from Komer, the White House, to McGeorge Bundy, 5 January 1963" JFKL, PPJFK, NSF, SAGF, Box 157: 1.
160. "Telegram from US Embassy Cairo (Badeau) to WDC, 22 January 1963," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786h.00/1-2263: 1.
161. "Telegram from US Permanent Mission to the UN (Stevenson) to WDC, 10 December 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786h.00/12-1062: 1.
162. "Telegram from US Embassy Cairo (Boswell) to WDC, 8 December 1962," NACPM, GRDOS-59, NEA, CDF 1960-1963, 786h.02/12-862: 2.
163. Kechichian, *Faysal*, 105-106.
164. Ibid., 134-136.
165. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 161.
166. Kechichian, *Faysal*, 137.
167. Ibid., 141.

168. "Letter from British Embassy Amman (Johnston) to FO (Hadow), 30 October 1958," PRO, FO371/134021.
169. "Telegram from Governor of Aden, Sir Charles Johnston, to CO, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15 February 1963," PRO CO1055/3: 1-3.
170. Comments of a senior member of the Saudi royal family, Interview on BBC, September 2006.
171. "394th Meeting of the NSC, 22 January 1959," *FRUS, 1958-1960, Near East Region, Volume XII*, Editorial Note, 626.
172. Cooper, "Showdown at Doha," 581.
173. National Security Advisor, Presidential Correspondence with Foreign Leaders: Iran –The Shah, Box 2, Gerald Ford Library as quoted in Cooper, "Showdown at Doha," 584.
174. Zhand Shakibi, *Revolution and the Collapse of Monarchy: Human Agency and the Making of Revolution in France, Russia, and Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris Press Limited, 2007), 87.
175. Cooper, "Showdown at Doha," 587.
176. Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 199-201. The Iranians also described the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Petroleum, Sheikh Yamani, as "a stooge of capitalist circles."
177. Alam, *The Shah and I*, 535.
178. Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 217.
179. Lawrence K. Altman, "Dr. Jean A. Bernard, 98, Dies; Found Cancer in Shah of Iran," *New York Times* (30 April 2006). See also, Lawrence K. Altman, M.D. "The Shah's Health: Political Gamble," *New York Times Magazine* (17 May 1981): http://www.nytimes.com/1981/05/17/magazine/the-shah-s-health-a-political-gamble.
180. Ervand Abrahamian, Khomeinism: *Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 21. Some scholars think that the Najaf period broadened the political scope of Khomeini's interpretation of wilayat-e fiqh. Perhaps this resulted from the struggle between the traditional Shi'a clergy and the Communists and Ba'thists in Iraq who were making serious gains among the educated Iraqi Shi'a. The reaction was a more aggressive theological approach.
181. Roy P. Mottahedeh, "Shi'ite Political Thought and the Destiny of the Iranian Revolution," Jamal S. al-Suwaidi, Editor, *Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996), 71.
182. Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 215. See also F. Gregory Gause III, *Saudi-Yemeni Relations: Domestic Structures and Foreign Influence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 147-149.
183. Roby C. Barrett, *Iran: Illusion, Reality, and Interests* (MacDill AFB, Florida: JSOU Press, 2012), 15-18. This is a very short summary of the *safaviyya*. For more detailed accounts see: Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 99-109; Willem Floor, *Safavid Government*

Institutions (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers Inc., 1980), 5-11; and A.H. Morton, "The Early Years of Shah Ismail in the Afzal al-Tavarikh and Elsewhere" in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* edited by Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris Press, 1996), 27-51. The *safiviyya* were largely Sevener (*Ismaili*) Sufi Shi'a who provided the backbone of the military force that conquered what is now Iran for Shah Ismail I, the first Safavid Shah. They were exceedingly difficult to defeat because they believed that they were on a divine mission and that Ismail himself was semi-divine and could not be defeated. The reference here is to the religious fervor combined with the political and military goals. They were virtually destroyed by the Ottomans at Chaldiran in 1514 where the Ottomans under Selim the Grim proved that messianism only went so far in the face of muskets and artillery. After 1514, Shah Ismail embraced more orthodox *Jafari* or Twelver Shi'ism. For a detailed account of the relationship between the *safaviyya* and the *aqquyunlu* (white sheep) *sufi* traditions and the rise of Safavid Persia see, John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1976). On page 180, he discusses the seriousness with which Shah Ismail took his "divine roll" among the paramount clan of the *Aqquyunlu* – hence the parallel with Khomeini's view of his role as the Shadow of God on Earth.

184. Phebe Marr, *Iraq: The Modern History* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), 177-181.

185. Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 233-238.

186. Hiro, *The Essential Middle East*, 154-155. For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had been formed in 1971 but the relationship between the emirates had never been constitutionally defined. In 1976, Sheikh Rashid bin Said al-Maktoum of Dubai had refused to ratify the constitution because it was centralized and potentially put Dubai in a subordinate position to Abu Dhabi which possessed most of the oil. The Iranian revolution and threat posed by Iran ended the standoff and Dubai joined with Abu Dhabi to establish a strong federal government over the emirates. Zahlan, *Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 113-114.

187. Zahlan, *Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 75-77.

188. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 310-312.

189. Conversation with former key western official directly responsible for security policy in the Middle East.

190. Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: Grove Press: 1991), 171-175.

191. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 149-153.

192. Champion, *The Paradoxical Kingdom*, 76.

193. N.J. Dawood, Editor, Ibn Khaldun – *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated from Arabic by Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), vii-xiv. Ibn Khaldun was a fourteenth century *maliki* North African scholar, lawyer, and government official. Ibn Khaldun wrote a "universal

history" of Arab society in which he argues that leadership in the Arab world depends on asabiyya, a shared solidarity that at its root is family, clan, and tribe but can extend beyond the family in political and economic terms. He expounded on this in the introduction to his famous historical work, *al-muqaddimah*.

194. Champion, *The Paradoxical Kingdom*, 218.

195. Ibid., 220-225.

196. Steve Coll, *The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 380-383.

197. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden from the Soviet invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 223.

198. "Al-Qaeda is now suspected in the 1996 bombing of barracks," New York Times (14 May 2003): http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/14/world/al-qaeda-is-now-suspected-in-1996-bombing-of-barracks.html The Khobar Towers attack in 1996 was officially attributed to Iran and its allies. Only after 9/11 did the idea emerge that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda had been involved based on tangential indications that Bin Laden had attempted to contact the Iranians about joint-operations against U.S. forces in the Arabian Gulf. The official finding in the case has not been changed and those imprisoned and executed for involvement were Shi'a radicals not al-Qaeda operatives.

199. Thomas W. Lippman, *Saudi Arabia on the Edge: The Uncertain Future of an American Ally* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012): 186-187.

200. Comment in 2008 by a senior U.S. military officer involved in contingency planning for Saudi Arabia.

201. Discussion with a former Foreign Service officer who is intimately familiar with Saudi Arabia, May 2013.

202. Lippman, *On the Edge*, 149-155. Lippman's chapter on the role of women is a particularly good analysis of the problems and the pressures for change.

203. In simplest terms, there are two types of *jihad* in the Islamic world, the "greater *jihad*" is often expressed as *ijtihad*, a term that refers to the inner struggle of individuals to improve themselves personally and spiritually. The western media and others focus on the "lesser *jihad*" or in western terms "holy war" and even that is a seldom understood simplistic interpretation. The latter makes for better press and exploitation by western groups and politicians; the former is benign and focused on the essence of self-improvement therefore it is far less marketable or exploitable in political terms.

204. See Roby C. Barrett, *Oman: The Present in the Context of a Fractured Past* (Tampa, Florida: JSOU Press – JSOU Report 11-5, 2011), 62. The figure of the hand of God smashing Communism is just one example of a conservative Islamic regime and its western allies using Islam to counter leftists or Communists.

205. A senior Arab Gulf military officer familiar with U.S. policy and the issues of the region. From Riyadh's point of view, the 2003 invasion created a security

disaster. The removal of a Sunni backed government with no plan or forethought and U.S. support for a Shi'a dominated regime in Baghdad shocked the Saudis. Senior Saudi officials referred to the government as "the Iranian government in Baghdad." The United States removed the Iraqi Sunni buffer against Iranian expansion and handed Iran in 10 weeks what the Iranians had been unable to attain in 10 years of war, namely control in Baghdad. From the point of view of Saudi Arabia, this blunder was so large that it was almost unimaginable. Almost as shocking was Washington's refusal to recognize the magnitude of the disaster that Iraq represented in terms of what the Saudis viewed as the interests of the Kingdom and the Gulf emirates. The invasion provided the catalyst for the current chaos engulfing the Levant.

206. A senior Arab Gulf military officer intimately familiar with U.S. policy and the issues of the region.
207. A senior Arab Gulf military officer intimately familiar with U.S. policy and the issues of the region.
208. A senior Arab Gulf military officer intimately familiar with U.S. policy and the issues of the region.
209. "Awkward relations – Saudi Arabia and the United States," *The Economist* (29 March 2014): 48.
210. A senior Arab Gulf military officer knowledgeable about Saudi and Gulf affairs.
211. A senior western diplomat familiar with Iranian and Saudi policy.
212. Nawaf Obaid and Saud al-Sarhan, "The Saudis Can Crush ISIS," The New York Times (7 September 2014): http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/09/opinion/the-saudis-can-crush-isis.html.
213. "Awkward relations – Saudi Arabia and the United States," *The Economist* (29 March 2014): 47.
214. "Why Bashar Assad is still in charge – Syria's war," *The Economist* (7 June 2014): 51.
215. Scott Pelley, "Former Defense Secretary: US in Syria too late, left Iraq too soon," CBS News (20 September 2014) http://news.yahoo.com/former-defense-secretary-u-syria-040455457.html;ylt=AwrBEiHvGyJUCBkAJk7QtDMD.
216. "Will the jihadist tide be stemmed? – Iraq," *The Economist* (28 June 2014): 39-40.
217. "Shuddering – Jordan and Iraq," *The Economist* (28 June 2014): 40.
218. "Amid ISIS violence Saudi King warns of threat to U.S." CBS News (30 August 2014): http://www.cbsnews.com/news/amid-isis-violence-saudi-arabia-king-abdullah-warns-of-threat-to-us/.
219. Nawaf Obaid and Saud al-Sarhan, "The Saudis Can Crush ISIS," *The New York Times* (7 September 2014): http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/09/opinion/the-saudis-can-crush-isis.html.
220. Ibid.

221. Discussion with a former Foreign Service officer who is intimately familiar with Saudi Arabia, May 2013. Even contractors who knew Abdullah when he was commander of the Saudi National Guard commented on how pleased they were that he had become the King. Senior western program manager supporting the Saudi National Guard (SNG) Training program.
222. Christopher Dickey, "The Monarch Who Declared His Own Revolution," *The Daily Beast – World News*, http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/03/20/the-monarch-who-declared-his-own-revolution.html.
223. Awadh Al-Badi, "Institutionalizing Hereditary succession in Saudi Arabia's Political Governance system: The Allegiance Commission, *futureislam.com*, 3 January 2008: http://www.futureislam.com/20080101/insight/Awadh_Al-Badi/The%20Allegiance%20Commision.asp.
224. Lippman, *On the Edge*, 85-104.
225. Abdullah Fakhry Ansary, "Saudi Judicial Reform and the Principle of Independence," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* 5 May 2009: http://carnegieendowment.org/2009/05/05/saudi-judicial-reform-and-principle-of-independence/fhpy
226. Abeer Allam, "Slow pace of Saudi law reforms under fire," *Financial Times*, 16 January 2013: http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4dc08100-5e65-11e2-a771-00144feab49a.html#axzz2XCaBK6of. This is an interesting article in several respects. It cites one case where a business stated that because judges tend to side with the lawyers that appear to be the most pious, he stated, "I have to keep lawyers with thick beards in the front line just to make sure I may get a fair verdict." Legal systems have similar attributes everywhere; the lawyer that one would use in California is likely not the same lawyer that one would use in Mississippi – that is assuming you wanted to win.
227. Lippman, *On the Edge*, 173.
228. Aryn Baker, "In Saudi Arabia, Women's Voices Are Starting to Be Heard," *Time – World*, 1 April 2013: http://world.time.com/2013/03/27/in-saudi-arabia-womens-voices-are-starting-to-be-heard/.
229. "Saudi women take seats in Shura Council," *Al Jazeera*, 19 February 2013: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/02/2013219201637132278.html.
230. Shibely Telhami, Principal Investigator, *2010 Annual Arab Public Opinion Survey*, Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development – University of Maryland with Zogby International, 5 August 2010.
231. Jason Burke, "Saudi Arabia's clerics challenge King Abdullah's reform agenda," *The Guardian*, 1 July 2011: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jul/01/saudi-arabia-clerics-king-abdullah.
232. Dickey, "The Monarch," See also, "Profile: Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud," History Commons, (downloaded 24 June 2013) http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=abdullah_bin_abdulaziz_al-saud.
233. Dickey, "The Monarch."

234. Imad Karmal Harb, "The Return of Strong U.S.-GCC Relations," National Council on U.S.—Arab Relations (*ncusar.org/blog/2014/11/return-strong-gcc-us-strategic-relations*/ 26 November 2014), 11.

235. "The Saudi succession – Next after next …" *The Economist* (5 April 2014): 40. Journalists looking for a controversy reported that Prince Muqrin was a controversial figure because his mother was a "Yemeni concubine not formally married to King Abd-al-Aziz." It appears that contrary to these reports the succession issue is settled and that King Abdullah has obtained a consensus among senior princes securing Muqrin's place in line. Liz Sly, "Appointment of Deputy Heir to the Throne Stirs Controversy in Saudi Arabia," *The Washington Post* (26 May 2014) http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/appointment-of-deputy-heir-to-throne-stirs-controversy-in-saudi-arabia/2014/05/26/1397be64-53cd-4a9c-b3f9-78c904abee92_story.html.

236. "Saudi succession," *The Economist*, 40.

237. Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Military and International Security Dimensions* (London: Praeger, 2003), 2.

238. Technical Cooperation Agreement between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed by Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, and Naif bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Minister of the Interior, 16 May 2008.

239. "Critical Infrastructure Protection and Cyber Security Trade Mission to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, September 28–October 1, 2013," *The Federal Register*, 31 January 2013: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/01/31/2013-02052/critical-infrastructure-protection-and-cyber-security-trade-mission-to-saudi-arabia-and-kuwait.

240. "Foreign nerves limit Syria rebel arms, Assad's arsenals raided," *Reuters*, 17 December 2012: http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/17/syria-arms-idUSL5E8NG7LG20121217.

241. Ivan Gale, "EADS wins Saudi border security contract," *The National*, 2 July 2009: http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/technology/eads-wins-saudi-border-security-contract.

242. A former senior U.S. Ambassador in the Arabian Gulf.

243. It should be pointed out that Saudi Arabia was not the only country with this problem. Congressional lawmakers in the U.S. who would later wholeheartedly support President Bush's "Global War on Terror" accused President Clinton of staging attacks on al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan to draw attention away from his impeachment problems.

244. Christopher Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," *Carnegie Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Program – Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 97, September 2008), 3-6.

245. Ibid., 21.

246. Clifford Krauss, Texas refinery is Saudi foothold in U.S. market," *New York Times*, 4 April 2013: http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/04/05/business/texas-refinery-is-saudi-foothold-in-us-market.html?f=23.

247. "What's behind Saudi's oil policy: Time for the conspiracy theorists to have their way," Arabian Business.com from *Reuters*, 19 November 2014: http://www.arabianbusiness.com/what-s-behind-saudi-s-oil-policy-time-for-conspiracy-theorists-have-their-say-572283.html#.VH--3IvgLFI.

248. Dan Roberts and Paul Lewis, "Obama left increasingly isolated as anger builds among key U.S. allies," *The Guardian*, 24 October 2013: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/24/obama-isolated-anger-builds-us-allies; See also Dan Murphy, "The U.S.-Saudi breakup that isn't," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 October 2013: http://news.yahoo.com/us-saudi-breakup-isnt-123411978.html. There have been dozens of articles on U.S.-Saudi relations in late October 2013. For several months, western diplomats have expressed increasing concern about the depth of frustration among the U.S.'s Gulf Arab allies with policies related to Syria and Iran. In fact, these developments are not limited to Saudi Arabia but extend to virtually all of the Arab Gulf states. No one involved—not the U.S., the Saudis or the Arab Gulf states—are contemplating a major change in their alliances but in all probability there will be more a quid pro quo required for cooperation on key issues, a development that Washington cannot afford to ignore.

249. See Roby C. Barrett, "Saudi Arabia and Policy under King Salman," Middle East Institute – mei.edu, 12 March 2015: http://www.mei.edu/content/article/saudi-arabia-and-policy-under-king-salman. This article is an analysis of likely Saudi policy under King Salman from the perspective of his role as Governor of Riyadh Province from 1963 to 2011.

250. Aarti Nagraj, "Saudi King Aims for New Sunni Bloc vs. Iran and Islamic State," *Hiiraan Online*, 8 March 2015: http://hiiraan.com/news4/2015/Mar/98496/saudi_king_aims_for_new_sunni_bloc_vs_iran_and_islamic_state.aspx.

251. John Kerry and Prince Saud al-Faisal, "Remarks with the Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal," U.S. Department of State – Diplomacy in Action, 4 November 2013: http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/11/216236.htm. See also, Roby C. Barrett, "Saudi Arabia's Return to Traditional Yemen Policy," *Middle East Institute*, 4 May 2015: http://www.mei.edu/content/article/saudi-arabias-return-traditional-yemen-policy.