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THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL STATES: SEARCHING FOR OPENINGS

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In the past fifteen years, the Gulf Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman) have been catapulted into the strategic limelight by an insatiable demand for their oil from Western Europe and Japan, and to a lesser but (for a time) growing extent, the United States. Considered by most in the early 1970s to be unstable because of their traditional political systems, dynastic rivalries, and above all the pressures of rapid modernization and accretion of wealth, they appeared to be inviting targets for domestic revolutionaries and external forces of change alike.

This situation has presented the leaders of the Soviet Union with difficult choices in tactics: whether to promote revolution, either directly or through proxies; to attempt to weaken the existing governments through other means, for instance by cooperating with forces of regional instability (in the process possibly driving the conservative regimes deeper into the embrace of the United States); or to woo these "reactionaries," and persuade them to put distance between themselves and the "imperialists."

Moscow's choice between these policy lines (or its decision to use all three at once) has been determined largely by local conditions, but whatever tactics have been used have been intended to promote a constant set of Soviet interests in the Gulf and its surrounding region. Predominant among these was the Kremlin's perception of the need to reduce Western influence and presence in the Gulf, in particular the U.S. military presence. This need may be said to stem from both "offensive" and "defensive" considerations (although as the debate over Soviet reasons for invading Afghanistan has shown, these are so

inextricably intertwined as to make distinguishing between them often an impossible task).

Foremost in the "defensive" category is the desire to prevent this contiguous region from being used as a launching platform for an attack on the USSR. This concern has applied mainly to the Northern Tier countries; however, the Gulf Arab countries' airfields and territorial waters could conceivably be used by an attacker. In addition, the Soviets consider American naval forces in the Indian Ocean (and the Diego Garcia base) to be dangerous, and would like to change Gulf Arab rulers' tacit acceptance of this presence. Foremost among Moscow's "offensive" considerations is its recognition of the vital role Gulf oil plays and will continue to play in the economies of the industrialized non-communist world. The Soviets recognize that uncertainty of supply, particularly when it is linked to political questions, creates divisions and weaknesses in the Western alliance, even if that uncertainty falls far short of actually according the Soviets leverage over supplies. Moreover, should the Soviet Union be able to obtain some leverage or to gain concessionary rates for Arab Gulf oil, its future difficulties in supplying oil to Eastern Europe might be alleviated.

Finally, the Soviets' desire to see Western influence and presence reduced is matched by their desire to increase Soviet influence and presence. They see Southwest Asia as their "backyard," noting at the same time that it is half the world away from the United States; for them, one of the litmus tests of superpower equality (an issue on which they are extremely sensitive) is their ability to affect events in this region. In the Arab Gulf this would mean eventual military equality with the West, and a wide range of Soviet personnel on the ground, dealing freely with the governments; but as a first step, Moscow

wants to establish economic and diplomatic relations with them. Equality of influence here would necessarily entail a significant reduction in American and Western impact, with substantial potential implications for superpower relations in other parts of the Third World.

Gains have not come easily to the Soviets in the states now making up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and those that have occurred have mostly been the result of events beyond their control or outside the GCC sub-region. On the whole they have been "negative gains" -- that is, they have reduced Western influence without increasing Soviet influence appreciably. One such gain was the withdrawal of Britain from the Gulf in 1971. This left the principalities, including a barely formed federation, in an apparent security vacuum, and seemed to provide Moscow with options. It had established relations with Kuwait in 1962, and could use its "good-neighborly ties" to encourage the new Gulf states to develop relations, or it could encourage radical forces (Iraq, the Arab Nationalist Movement, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) that opposed the "feudal" regimes. In fact it tried to do both. It recognized the new states, but Saudi pressure apparently convinced the latter not to proceed with diplomatic relations. At the same time, Moscow was improving its ties with Iraq and the PDRY, two radical states that supported the activities of revolutionary groups in the Gulf, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf, which was waging a guerrilla war in the Dhofar province of Oman in the early 1970s.

Although Moscow's support for this war was limited and never official,[1] it did arouse the fear and hostility of the Gulf Arab countries (especially Saudi Arabia), which saw the Dhofar war, and Soviet friendship with Iraq, the PDRY, and the Yemen Arab Republic as an encircling movement. Soviet involvement

also entangled it in the web of broader regional politics, as Iraq made increasing claims on territory belonging to Kuwait, and the Shah of Iran (whom Moscow did not want to antagonize) moved to compete with Iraq for predominance in the Gulf. Nor was there any sign in the Gulf Arab states that revolution would be successful in the foreseeable future.

However, by 1974 the Soviets perceived a new opportunity for state-to-state relations as the Arab-Israeli conflict spread to the Gulf. When the Arab members of OPEC initiated an oil embargo against the United States and Holland as a result of the U.S. airlift of military aid to Israel during the October war in 1973, Moscow took advantage of the anti-Western mood in the Arab world to applaud the embargo vigorously and remind the Gulf Arabs of its support of Arab causes; if they truly wished to defeat Israel, the propaganda campaign went, they should reject the United States (Israel's main arms and financial supplier) and turn to the USSR.

Once again, however, local conditions negated Soviet efforts. The phenomenal rise in oil revenues in the middle and late 1970s enabled the Gulf Arab states to use economic aid to moderate and deflect local and Arab criticism of their continued conservatism and ties with the West. Moreover, even the widespread distrust and anger at U.S. policies in the Middle East could not make the Soviet Union more attractive. To the long-standing ties between Gulf elites and the West, to ideological and religious distaste for communism, to distrust of the Soviets for their support of revolutionaries, was added the inability of the USSR to provide the high technology and consumer goods wanted by these newly wealthy and rapidly developing societies -- an inability punctuated by the fact that it did not need Gulf oil, hence was unlikely to serve as an alternative market for the Gulf.

Thus in the 1970s no other Gulf Arab state followed Kuwait's urgings to establish relations with Moscow, recognizing that although Kuwait had special needs for these ties, the others did not. Kuwait's striving for true non-alignment was (and continues to be) based not only on its distrust of Washington's Middle East policies, due to the close ties between the United States and Israel; it also feared the possibility of an angry backlash from its substantial Palestinian minority. More importantly, its precarious situation in the region, with stronger and ambitious countries on all its borders, forces Kuwait to seek its security from a variety of sources, including the Soviet Union and the West. In both the early 1960s and early 1970s the main threat came from Iraq, and Kuwait tried (with some success in 1973) to use its relations with the USSR to moderate Iraq's behavior. In late 1975 Kuwait further emphasized its non-aligned posture by endorsing non-intervention in the Gulf and buying Soviet weapons.

Saudi Arabia and Iran used their increased oil revenues to oppose actively Soviet objectives in the region, turning to the United States for help in building up their security and defence forces. The Shah came to the aid of the Sultan of Oman, and Iranian forces helped to end the Dhofari rebellion by 1976. Saudi Arabia also provided monetary aid to the Sultan to allow him to enact economic and social policies that promised to preserve his regime. Elsewhere on the Arabian Peninsula, Riyadh used its oil money to exert influence on North Yemen and to begin to tie it into an arms-supply relationship with the United States. More ominously for the Soviets, in 1976 the Saudis exchanged diplomatic recognition with South Yemen, and appeared to be making a bid to wean it from its Soviet patron.[2] In addition, Riyadh was promoting the idea of a Red Sea security pact aimed at containing Ethiopia and excluding the USSR.

However, Saudi interest in these ventures declined abruptly in the late 1970s. The Soviet intervention in Ethiopia in November 1977 (including an impressive lift of materiel and Cuban troops) and American inactivity (especially when combined with earlier statements in the U.S. about intervening in the Gulf in the event of a "strangling" oil embargo, mutterings which Soviet propaganda used to good effect) made the Saudi leadership reluctant to try actively to counter Soviet moves. Moreover, Riyadh's difficulties in obtaining advanced U.S. weapons (the F-15s, their bomb racks and auxiliary fuel tanks, as well as the AWACS), due to Congressional opposition fortified by the pro-Israel lobby, left the Saudis suspicious of Washington's reliability and unwilling to take risks to protect American interests. Finally, the July 1978 coup in Aden removed any vestiges of Saudi influence and seemed to solidify Soviet positions at the south end of the Red Sea, while Riyadh's inability to affect the outcome of the brief border conflict between the Yemens in March 1979 served to make the Saudis even more cautious about challenging Soviet interests.[3]

The events of 1979 seemed to mark a watershed in Soviet fortunes in the Gulf. It began with the collapse of the "pillar" of American policy in the region, and ended with Soviet troops imposing themselves potentially within striking distance of the Strait of Hormuz, a choke-point in the West's oil lifeline. In between, Moscow seemed to make gains in the Yemens and on the Arab-Israeli front that would improve their prospects in the Gulf.

The fall of the Shah was a disaster for U.S. regional interests, for it removed an ally whose protection was on the whole acceptable to the smaller Gulf states. The only other realistic alternative at the time was a security arrangement openly connected to the United States, and Gulf rulers (with the exception of the Sultan of Oman) saw this cure as more dangerous than the

disease. Gulf rulers were disturbed by the tendency of American politicians to think in terms of military solutions, but also paradoxically by the failure of the United States to intervene to save the Shah. The Islamic fundamentalism unleashed by the revolution seemed likely to cause considerable difficulties for the modernizing, pro-Western rulers, if indeed it did not overwhelm them. For the United States, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism would entail disruptions in oil supplies and an increased determination among Gulf Arabs to challenge U.S. support for Israel.

The United States and Soviet Union appear to have a zero-sum approach to Third World situations. Moscow, knowing that Washington's positions in the Gulf had been badly shaken by the overthrow of the Shah and the victory of the Ayatollah Khomeini, moved to enhance its own positions. The Soviets had coexisted quite comfortably with the Shah. Now they scrambled to excoriate him while praising the "progressive nature" of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Taking credit for the reluctance of the United States to intervene, they offered their friendship to the Islamic Republic. At the same time, the Tudeh party (Iran's pro-Moscow Communist party) quickly expressed its support of both the revolution and the Ayatollah.

On the other hand the Soviet leaders were aware that a too-enthusiastic embrace would endanger other Soviet interests in the Gulf region. In particular, Iraq was very sensitive to real or imagined shifts in Soviet relations with Iran. Baghdad's long-standing hostility toward Iran was reawakened by the danger of Iranian-sponsored Shi'ite opposition in Iraq; at the same Iraqi aspirations to greater regional influence were whetted by the apparent collapse of the Iranian armed forces, and by the leading role that Saddam Hussain took in the anti-Camp David movement. This involved a rapprochement with Saudi Arabia

and the probability that this would accentuate Baghdad's edging away from Moscow, noticeable since 1978.

The Soviets also recognized the Gulf Arab rulers' fear that events in Iran could spill over into the rest of the Gulf, and were concerned lest closer Soviet-Iranian ties encourage increased anti-Soviet sentiment and closer U.S.-Arab Gulf relations, despite the growing reluctance of the Gulf states to rely on the United States as an ally. Thus in January 1979 a Soviet foreign ministry official was sent to Kuwait to reassure that government and the others in the Gulf about Soviet friendship and non-culpability for events in Iran.[4] Earlier, Leonid Brezhnev reportedly sent two messages to Riyadh expressing a desire to re-establish diplomatic ties. For several months the Soviet media published articles flattering to Saudi Arabia (although not totally uncritical), in which was repeated that call.[5] Riyadh was angry at the Camp David accords, at the failure of the United States to fulfill defence-equipment sales commitments to the Kingdom, and at U.S. suggestions for a Gulf security agreement that would allow American forces access to military facilities. The Saudis seemed to be responding to the Soviets; Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal acknowledged the "positive stands adopted by the Soviet Union toward Arab causes," and stated that Saudi Arabia recognized the USSR and its importance in international affairs.[6]

Nevertheless, even if Riyadh was seriously considering developing relations with the Soviets, events in the region forestalled the move. As Moscow was making its diplomatic advances, conflict broke out on the border between the two Yemens; South Yemen demonstrated its superiority, and the Saudis were unable to affect the outcome. This was clearly not the time to open the door to the Soviets. Moreover, in the summer of 1979 the Soviets signed a large arms

deal with North Yemen, encouraging it in its aspirations to greater flexibility vis-à-vis Riyadh. In October South Yemen and the USSR signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Coming on the heels of the Yemeni unity agreement which had been signed in Kuwait at the end of March, these moves must have been seen in Saudi Arabia not simply as guaranteeing Soviet positions in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula; rather, they must have looked like the deliberate application of Soviet pressure, or even as potential steps toward a Soviet client state which would be a potent force on the Peninsula. These concerns were compounded in November by the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by religious fanatics.

Iranian-inspired disturbances in Bahrain and Kuwait in September 1979 finally convinced the Gulf Arab states to begin discussions on security cooperation; the need was underlined by Shi'ite disturbances in eastern Saudi Arabia in November. Interestingly, the Soviets barely commented. While theoretically the Soviet Union stands to benefit from unrest in the Gulf Arab states, by the end of 1979 Moscow must in fact have been wary of unrest inspired by Iran or Islamic fundamentalists. Iran, although satisfactorily anti-American, was showing no signs of responding to Soviet courtship. Meanwhile, Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan were threatening the existence of the Soviet puppet regime there, and preparations for the Soviet invasion were underway. The Soviets of course believed that successful revolutions in the Arab states would be another staggering blow to the United States and the West. However, unsuccessful efforts could push the governments into security measures (as they did) and into closer ties with the United States, which was already seeking access to military facilities in the region and bolstering its Indian Ocean naval presence. Premature Soviet public support for

unsuccessful uprisings or for national liberation movements with no chance of success would only compound the problem.

Moscow had been somewhat insensitive to this fact at the beginning of 1979. A delegation representing the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) arrived in Moscow in April for an "unofficial" but highly publicized visit. PFLO was by this time defunct as a fighting force, but with Iranian troops having been just withdrawn from Dhofar, the Soviets may have been trying to intimidate Sultan Qabus to prevent him from increasing security cooperation with the United States. If this was their intent, the resurrection of PFLO was counterproductive. Qabus began to emphasize the communist threat and requested arms aid from Washington. He also began to urge the Americans to play a more active role in the region and in the late summer proposed to the other Arab Gulf states a security arrangement for navigation in the Strait of Hormuz which would have been linked to U.S. naval support.

Moscow reacted with bitter criticism of this proposal. However, when it saw that the other Gulf states were rejecting the Omani plan, it played up the differences, singling out Kuwait for its avowals of friendship with the Soviet Union and its rejection of U.S. military involvement in the Gulf.[7] Except for their personal attacks on Qabus, the Soviets couched their propaganda in terms of the danger to the Gulf Arab states of increased U.S. Navy forces in the Indian Ocean, and of reported American plans to create a rapid deployment force to defend the oilfields. They reminded the Gulf Arabs about past American musings on occupying the oilfields and about the leading role the United States had played in the Camp David agreement and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, both overwhelmingly unpopular in the Arab world. Occasionally, hints also broke through that because of its own vital security interests, the

USSR would match increased U.S. military involvement, thereby dragging the Gulf into superpower confrontations.[8]

Hints such as these took on added significance at the end of 1979 when Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, installed a new government and set out to crush Islamic fundamentalist and nationalist resistance. All of the Gulf states initially reacted with outrage and worry. All voted in the U.N. General Assembly to condemn the USSR's action. Saudi Arabia led the Islamic Conference Organization's condemnation, and Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal seemed to be advocating an anti-Soviet struggle in his speech to that organization's Foreign Ministers:

> In the past, we expressed our appreciation for the Soviet Union's stand on the Palestinian issue. We hope that its stand and behaviour in Afghanistan will not confront the Arab states in particular and the Islamic states in general with the difficult choice -- either to be subservient to it, obeying its desire, or to stand up against it and work to oppose it.[9]

However, prior to this, Crown Prince Fahd had struck a more realistic note about Saudi capabilities, and at the Islamic Conference meeting Kuwait's Foreign Minister took a more balanced position (though not one very much appreciated by Moscow), demanding the withdrawal of both the Israelis from occupied Arab territories and the Soviets from Afghanistan.[10] In mid-year Saud al-Faisal added an incentive, declaring that Saudi Arabia would consider establishing relations with the USSR should it pull out its forces.[11]

Recognizing these as encouraging signs, Moscow set out to limit the damage to its image by unleashing a blizzard of propaganda. Although it began with a crude equation of anti-Sovietism with pro-Zionism,[12] on the whole this campaign avoided direct attacks except in response to a direct criticism. It focussed on two themes: that there was no contradiction between communism and Islam; and (more successfully) that the Americans were using the USSR's "fraternal

assistance" to Afghanistan as a pretext to build up their military presence and impose their will on the Gulf. It was the United States (so the message went) that, half the world away, had declared the Gulf to be "vital" to it, and had long wished to control the Gulf's oil resources; the USSR had no need of the oil and had never sought to dominate the Gulf.[13] This was by no means a new message, but as before it struck a responsive chord in almost all the Gulf Arab countries, most particularly in Kuwait, where spokesmen on several occasions stated that the Soviet Union posed no threat to the Gulf.

The Soviets also attempted to deny the idea that the Gulf was an area of vital interest to the United States by calling for an all-European agreement on the "security of oil communications and equal commercial access to oil sources of the Persian Gulf region." In hindsight this must have been too redolent of the "superpower condominium" approach, and within a few days it had been changed to an "international conference on the Indian Ocean to guarantee supply lines."[14] However, even in this watered-down version the idea gained no support and it sank from sight.

Never mentioned in Soviet propaganda, but weighing heavily on the minds of Gulf rulers, was the dramatic increase in the USSR's shadow of power by the spring of 1980. Over the previous three years the Soviets had strengthened their positions on the fringes of the Gulf, in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and South Yemen (although they had lost influence in Baghdad, as the Iraqi government began to look to the West for weapons and high technology). They had demonstrated their vastly improved capability to lift troops and equipment, not simply on relatively short hauls into Afghanistan but (more importantly to the Gulf) over longer distances. To these facts were added the overwhelming imbalance of Soviet forces over any others in southwest Asia, and strategic parity with the United

States, which many thought had paralyzed the reactive capabilities of Washington, still struggling with its post-Vietnam syndrome. Now Soviet forces were in Afghanistan, potentially a bare 350 miles from the Strait of Hormuz.[15] A prudent leader of a small state in a volatile region might well decide that accommodation with the Soviet Union would be the most effective guarantee of his regime's security.

Gulf rulers (except Sultan Qabus) did seem to be moving along this path, at least in their public statements. Not that they endorsed Soviet policies; they did not. However, they did adopt a declaratory policy that Gulf security was the responsibility of the Gulf states alone. Should this be rigorously applied, American forces would be excluded from the region, while Soviet forces (even after a withdrawal from Afghanistan) would be positioned on its edges. In view of the Gulf Arab states' military inferiority in relation to Iraq and Iran, of the reappearance of hostility between those two in early 1980, and of the potential for instability aroused by Iran's ideological proselytizing of Shi'ite minorities across the Gulf, this policy must have been seen in Moscow as a prescription for continued weakness of the Gulf Arab states.

Nevertheless, any Soviet comfort from these developments was marred by counter-tendencies that it could not control, as well as by its own actions, most notably of course its brutal behavior in Afghanistan. Iraq's adoption of the call for superpower disengagement from the Gulf, embodied in Saddam Hussain's Pan-Arab Charter in February 1980, did not bode well for a strong Soviet influence in Iraq. The broadcast by Moscow's Radio Peace and Progress of a long piece praising the tiny and ineffectual Bahrain National Liberation Front in its struggle against "the Bahraini ruling clique"[16] would not have reassured other Gulf rulers. However, the most difficult development for the achievement

of Soviet goals in the region was the resurgence of American resolve, exemplified by the Carter Doctrine, the U.S. naval buildup in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman, and the determination to proceed quickly with the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). All the rulers balked at housing the RDF or admitting they would cooperate in the venture even to the extent of allowing the United States to pre-position equipment. However, Oman did sign an agreement with Washington to allow U.S. forces access (although not automatic access) to the Masirah Island airfield and a number of other Omani military facilities in return for substantial military and economic aid. Although the other Gulf rulers publicly disapproved of this deal (especially after U.S. forces made unauthorized use of Masirah during the disastrous attempt to free the American hostages in Tehran in April 1980, a gaffe the Soviets publicized effectively), they doubtless were not completely unhappy at a strong U.S. presence, not too visible, but not too far away.

These feelings were, if anything, made more acute by the Iraqi attack on Iran in September 1980. This fighting appeared to constitute a profound threat to the Gulf Arab countries no matter what its outcome or their stance toward it. They were forced along two paths. The first was closer cooperation among themselves in internal security and military matters. Desultory discussions picked up momentum in the fall and were given added impetus in November after Iranian planes fired missiles at two border posts in Kuwait. The attack underlined their vulnerability, as well as the need for more sophisticated air-defence systems; Saudi Arabia's earlier request for four AWACS aircraft with American aircrew and technicians was vindicated, as was the second path: closer military ties to the West.

Moscow was understandably upset. It had not been consulted by Iraq, yet it was expected to support its erstwhile ally and incur even more hostility from Iran (a country that on most accounts was more important to it than Iraq). Yet even if it followed this course it could have greater difficulty making inroads in the Gulf. In the event, the Soviets compounded the problem by clearly tilting toward Iran in the early stages of the war. Nor would the Gulf rulers have appreciated Brezhnev's greetings in October to a conference supporting the national liberation movements of the Gulf. Faced with the collapse of its regional policies, Moscow reverted to a traditional Soviet tactic: the broad peace initiative. On 10 December, while on a state visit to India, Brezhnev proposed an international agreement:

> 1) not to create foreign military bases in the Persian Gulf or on adjacent islands; not to deploy nuclear weapons of mass destruction there;
>
> 2) not to use force or threaten the use of force against Persian Gulf countries, and not to interfere in their internal affairs;
>
> 3) to respect the non-aligned status chosen by the Persian Gulf states; not to draw them into military groupings to which nuclear powers are party;
>
> 4) to respect the sovereign right of the states of this region to their natural resources; and
>
> 5) not to create any obstacles or threats to normal trade and the use of sea lanes linking the states of this region with other countries of the world.[17]

The proposals met with mixed reviews in the Gulf. Only the national liberation movements, not a significant factor in Gulf politics, endorsed them. Kuwait gave lukewarm approval, while Saudi Arabia and Oman rejected them for completely ignoring the presence of Soviet bases in South Yemen and Ethiopia and troops in Afghanistan. All the Gulf states recognized that they constituted an implied claim to a role in Gulf security and energy supply questions, a

further indication that the superpower competition was spreading to the region. More voices within the Gulf expressed the desire for greater cooperation among the six countries.

This movement came to fruition in February 1981 when the Gulf Arab foreign ministers agreed to the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). To deflect criticism from radical and leftist circles, the participants stressed the economic, technical, and cultural aspects of cooperation. However, all the GCC members were clearly preoccupied with defence and internal security. The Iran-Iraq war raged on; the Gulf Arab states were openly and materially siding with Iraq, and no one knew how Iran would respond. Oman, still pressing for a Hormuz security arrangement, was moving into a closer relationship with the United States; joint military exercises in communications were to be held in March, on Omani territory for the first time. Tension between Oman and the PDRY was rising as a result.

Moscow's response to the GCC discussions was multi-faceted and somewhat effective, but also at times counterproductive. There were occasional harsh attacks on the idea;[18] but for the most part the Soviets muted their criticisms, in order not to play into the hands of those wanting closer military cooperation between the GCC and the West. They continued their campaign against the U.S. military buildup in the region, and also promoted their own Persian Gulf proposals, which Brezhnev reiterated during the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February.[19] (The publicity given to Gulf national liberation movements' support of the Persian Gulf proposals and the high profile accorded to the delegate from the Bahrain NLF at the Congress was indicative of the Soviets' unhappiness at the Gulf Arab rulers' stance; on the other hand, the lack of publicity for the PFLO, even though the U.S.-Omani

exercises took place during the Congress, demonstrated that they recognized the pitfalls in pushing the Sultan too hard.)

Moscow also took heart from expressions of Gulf unhappiness over American policy in the Gulf and Middle East, and from Saudi Arabia's anger over the bruising battle in the U.S. Congress over the sale of AWACS aircraft and F-15 enhancements. At the same time, Moscow saw these purchases as a setback, possibly a step toward official U.S.-Saudi military links and pre-positioning for the RDF. However, again Soviet criticism was muted, and they concentrated on their assets, mainly Kuwait's overriding belief that its interests could only be protected by non-alignment and the exclusion of the superpowers from the Gulf. Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Shaikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir as-Sabah, visited Moscow at the end of April 1981 for talks with Andrei Gromyko. Although both sides agreed that the Gulf states should be responsible for their own security and that foreign military bases should be excluded from the region, the talks were not a complete success. Shaikh Sabah did endorse Brezhnev's Middle East peace proposals; moreover, the mere fact of his visit demonstrated the lack of unity of the conservative Arab opposition to Soviet moves in Afghanistan, and was an effective counterpoint to Alexander Haig's just-completed tour of the Middle East seeking a "strategic consensus" against the Soviet Union. However, the wording of the communiqué ("detailed exchange of opinions," "the proximity of the sides' views")[20] indicated considerable disagreement; the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister did not endorse Brezhnev's Gulf proposals, expressed opposition to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and urged Moscow to pressure the PDRY to come to terms with Oman. He also argued that the GCC was not aimed at the Soviet Union or any other country. Gromyko demurred, pointing to Oman's agreement with the United States on access to its military facilities. Sabah then

argued that if the PDRY lowered tensions with Oman, Oman could be persuaded to abrogate its agreement with Washington.[21] The Soviets did not believe this (nor did Sultan Qabus give them reason to), but implied that they might apply pressure to the PDRY if the GCC states established relations with the USSR.[22]

The GCC states remained unconvinced. The Soviet case was not helped by an interview given by Leonid Zamiatin, (then Chief of the CPSU Central Committee's International Information Department) to the Kuwaiti paper As-Siyasah, in which he advocated a conference on Gulf security with participation from both the Soviet Union and the United States; this was seen by many as a return to the "superpower condominium" idea.[23] Nor was a Soviet naval visit to Aden (unusual for the publicity accompanying it) during the GCC's founding summit meeting appreciated. Nevertheless, the visit (which may have been at the insistence of the PDRY) did not prevent the GCC from again rejecting the Omani call for coordinated military planning with the United States. Apparently encouraged, the Soviets were rumoured to be pursuing relations with Saudi Arabia and the UAE.[24] The latter, toward which the Soviets had made commercial overtures in March, appeared to be more receptive; Sheikh Zayed Al-Nahayan, the President of the UAE, referred on one occasion to the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan "at the official invitation" of the country's government.[25]

Nevertheless, if there had been any prospects for relations, they were dissipated by events in the second half of 1981. Further Iranian air attacks on Kuwait in June and October made that country more interested in a Gulf air-defence plan; while the approval of the AWACS purchase made it likely that those aircraft would form the basis for any plan. The signing of the Tripartite Alliance (South Yemen, Ethiopia, Libya) in August, with the reported collusion

of the Soviets,[26] again aroused the concern of Oman and Saudi Arabia, and may have led to pressure on Kuwait not to go ahead with its intended purchase of Soviet air-defence weapons.[27] Moscow attempted to recoup by supporting Crown Prince Fahd's Middle East peace plan, but was undermined by Syria's rejection of it and by Soviet criticism of the AWACS purchase and Saudi oil pricing policies.[28] There was a brief flurry of excitement in the Soviet media as Moscow Radio reported that the Saudi Foreign Minister had endorsed the idea of an international conference, with the participation of the Soviet Union, as the best way to safeguard permanent peace in the Middle East.[29] Shortly thereafter, the same source reported that the GCC members had offered large-scale aid to Oman if it abrogated its facilities agreement with the United States.[30]

However, Gulf attention was abruptly switched away from foreign affairs issues to internal security by a foiled coup in Bahrain in December, reported to be only one of a series in the Gulf planned by Iran.[31] In its wake, Saudi Arabia quickly signed bilateral security agreements with the other GCC members (except Kuwait), and the first public call came (from Bahrain's Interior Minister) for a GCC rapid deployment force, which would be capable of helping Gulf states to deal with internal unrest.

Acceptance of this proposal and of the idea of creating an early warning system based on the AWACS gained momentum, especially after the Gulf war changed course with Iran's invasion of Iraq in July 1982. There was little Moscow could do initially to halt the GCC's slide into closer ties with the United States except continue its existing policies. The Soviets raged against American plans to intervene in the Gulf; they focussed on the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who was said to be trying to use Saudi

Arabia and Oman to turn the GCC into a "closed military bloc" (i.e., excluding the USSR) serving the interests of American imperialism.[32] Oman was subjected to particularly strong Soviet media attacks despite (or perhaps because of) its agreement to negotiate an end to hostile relations with the PDRY. In this negative mode, however, Moscow used Radio Peace and Progress, an "unofficial" Soviet station. This practice (more noticeable with regard to the Gulf after the formation of the GCC) gave Moscow official deniability, while allowing it to quote national liberation movements or to attack Saudi Arabia for supporting the Afghan mujahidin.

The positive side of Soviet policy continued as well. The Bahrain coup attempt was given little publicity in the Soviet media, as was Bahrain's decision to buy U.S. fighter aircraft. Soviet spokesmen made periodic attempts to convince Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states that it would be advantageous to establish relations. The modest commercial initiatives of the USSR and East European countries continued. To these various moves the response was as before: Kuwait supported them, Oman decried them, and the others made a few encouraging sounds, most likely with an eye to keeping Moscow and Washington off balance. (The UAE interior minister did go to Moscow for a private visit for medical treatment; even if no official contacts took place, this was an indication that normal relations were not out of the question.)

These Soviet tactics were a holding action, such as Moscow has been forced to conduct much of the time in this region. However, as before, regional events allowed the Soviets to make a little headway. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June and the siege of West Beirut caused an outburst of anti-American outrage in the Gulf. Nevertheless, Moscow was hampered in its propaganda by the widespread criticism it received for its failure to intervene on behalf of the

Palestinians and for the poor performance of its weapons in Syrian hands. Frustrated, the Soviets lost some ground by lashing out at Arab countries for their disunity and the oil states in particular for their refusal to use their oil weapon.

In addition, in the spring of 1982 the Soviet Union was being accused by the GCC (led by the Saudis) of throwing its "full weight" behind Iran after that country had moved onto the offensive against Iraq.[33] However, Iran had shown no sign of allying itself to the Soviet Union, and Moscow had every interest in preventing a clear-cut Iranian victory, which might bring the United States into the Gulf by consent. Thus, to the relief of the Gulf Arab states the Soviet Union resumed sales of weapons (halted shortly after the war began) to Iraq.

The improvement in relations between Oman and the PDRY, which led to their normalization agreement in October 1982, also improved Soviet prospects in the Gulf, although Oman had not been obliged to reduce its close ties with the United States. The available evidence suggests that Moscow was not consulted by Aden and did not approve.[34] Nevertheless, the favourable fallout in the Gulf from the PDRY-Oman deal and a subsequent friendly PDRY-Saudi meeting did enhance Moscow's acceptability among the Gulf states. The Soviets tried to take advantage with a minor overture to both Qatar (for the first time) and Saudi Arabia, and a major attack on U.S. activities in the Indian Ocean.

The Andropov months (November 1982 to February 1984) seemed to involve less public attention and on the whole a tougher approach toward the GCC countries. The Saudi Foreign Minister visited Moscow in December as part of an Arab League delegation (the first Saudi official visitor since 1932), and his talk with Gromyko was said in Arab reports to be cordial, "concerning possible restoration of relations...in the near future";[35] however, the Soviet media made

no attempt to capitalize on it. In April King Fahd made an unprecedented appeal to Andropov to exert his efforts to help in ending the Iran-Iraq war; again the Soviets barely responded. At the same time, on several occasions during Andropov's brief tenure the Communist Party of Saudi Arabia[36] and the Bahrain NLF were publicized, and Saudi policy criticized.

Soviet inattention was largely due to the paralysis engendered by Andropov's health and by other much greater concerns in domestic and foreign policy. The tougher line may have been a spillover from the Soviets' sense that they were on the defensive in the Middle East, what with a stalemate in the Gulf War (for which Kuwait's foreign minister blamed both the United States and the Soviet Union),[37] the arrest of the Tudeh leaders and expulsion of Soviet diplomats from Tehran, the Soviet Union's inability to control Syria in its attempt to undermine PLO Fatah leader Yasir Arafat, and the stationing of U.S. and other Western forces in Lebanon. Added to these were the continuing apparent close linkage between the United States and a much enhanced GCC defence through AWACS, arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and the facilities agreement with Oman (which the GCC apparently was no longer trying to cancel).[38] It was small wonder that Moscow appeared to downgrade its interest in improving relations with GCC countries. (However, the Omanis revealed in 1985 that it was during Andropov's time that the contacts began that culminated in the establishment of relations.)[39]

Following Andropov's death in February 1984, regional events during Konstantin Chernenko's year in office once again encouraged the Soviets to pay more attention to the Gulf, although the state of his health and the continuing succession struggle in the Kremlin militated against major initiatives. At the

same time (perhaps partly due to this lack of activism) the GCC grew less wary of the idea of relations with the USSR.

The U.S. commitment of Marines to Beirut from September 1982 until February 1984, evidence of "a starkly bipolar [interpretation of] Lebanon's complex political realities" coupled with an "exaggerated belief in the efficacy of military force,"[40] and seen in the Gulf as a policy supporting Israeli aggression, had aroused further concern as to Washington's ability to respond appropriately to Gulf needs. Paradoxically, Gulf leaders also worried that the forced withdrawal of the Marines was yet another example of Washington's unreliability in a crisis. These concerns became urgent as the Gulf war heated up again in the spring of 1984, with attacks on shipping and Iranian threats to close the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined Kuwait in criticizing U.S. policy in Lebanon, while Oman seemed to back slightly away from its relationship to the United States.[41] The Saudi Ambassador to the United States made several widely publicized feints in the direction of Moscow.[42] The Reagan administration defused some of this criticism by agreeing to the sale of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to Saudi Arabia, while the role of the AWACS in the Saudi downing of an Iranian plane in June also helped U.S. prestige in the Gulf. However, the refusal of Congress, under pressure from the Israeli lobby, to approve the sale of Stingers to Kuwait again cast doubt on Washington's reliability.

Moscow made what it could of the situation. It abandoned its open criticism of Oman and again courted Saudi Arabia, praising Riyadh for its role in the abrogation of the U.S.-backed agreement between Israel and Lebanon.[43] It continued to develop commercial ties with the UAE. It supported the GCC-sponsored resolution in the U.N. Security Council against Iran's attacks on

Gulf shipping. It conducted a propaganda campaign throughout the spring and summer of 1984, insisting that the United States was about to use the attacks against shipping as a pretext for military intervention and seizure of the oilfields. Perhaps more importantly, the Soviet Union quickly offered to sell Kuwait the anti-aircraft missiles it was seeking, and indeed to "satisfy all Kuwait's needs for various weapons."[44]

Relations between the GCC and United States did not decline further, partly because the Gulf conflict subsided, but also because of Washington's low-key response both to the Kuwait arms deal and to the conflict itself. These same facts (Soviet arms sales and U.S. low-key responses, as well as the usual anger over U.S. ties with Israel) probably also encouraged GCC members to proceed with normalization of relations with the Soviet Union. Reports appeared on several occasions in the fall of 1984 of Saudi and UAE contacts with Soviet officials and of lessened Saudi resistance to relations between the USSR and the UAE. These reports were buttressed by the establishment of diplomatic relations between the UAE and China (not an event that would please Moscow, but nevertheless one that indicated diminished antipathy to communist countries). The resumption of relations between Washington and Baghdad in December also contributed to the move toward GCC-Soviet relations by lowering the level of ideological and superpower competition.

Thus, in retrospect it is evident that by the time Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985 the prospects for Soviet advances in the Gulf were much improved. Expressions of antagonism toward Soviet occupation forces in Afghanistan had been muted; for instance, in December 1984 the Islamic Conference Organization barely mentioned Afghanistan and did not refer to the USSR, though it attacked the United States. Saudi Arabia, it is true, continued

to support the mujahidin financially, but on the whole the GCC states seemed to have decided that Soviet activities in Afghanistan did not threaten them. Likewise, the Sultan of Oman appeared to have accepted the possibility that the PDRY's moderation was genuine, and that the Soviets could and would help to keep it that way; he abandoned the anti-Soviet rhetoric of previous years, and appeared to put greater restrictions on U.S. access to Omani facilities, making it contingent upon the request of the majority of the GCC.[45] In the Gulf the main external threat was perceived to be Iran. Moscow had succeeded in dissociating itself from the Islamic Republic both by propaganda attacks on it and by arms sales to Iraq and Kuwait. The United States promised more active support against Iran, but its reliability as an arms supplier was in great doubt due to the Israeli lobby's influence on Congress, and its acceptability as a partner was problematic; some balance (even if only superficial) in relations with the superpowers might offset continuing ties with Washington. Good relations with the Soviets might also give them some stake in the existing Gulf regimes.

Reported Soviet contacts with Gulf countries increased in the spring and summer of 1985. Semi-official visits by a Saudi sports delegation to Moscow and by a Soviet tourism delegation to Bahrain (the first visit by a Soviet government delegation) indicated that the barriers were dropping. Other behind-the-scenes contacts were reportedly conducted in an effort to find an end to the Gulf war. The Soviet media played up U.S.-Saudi differences, particularly over arms sales and the Palestinian question, but they also published articles critical of Saudi foreign and domestic policies,[46] evidence perhaps of differences of opinion in Moscow about normalization of relations.

It came as a surprise, however, that the diplomatic breakthrough in September was with Oman, which for all its moderation in the past year was still the most openly anti-Soviet country in the GCC. It was followed two months later by the UAE. (Bahrain, which had advocated in June that GCC members reconsider their lack of relations with the USSR, announced in November that it would not do so.)

Sultan Qabus tried to portray his decision in a matter-of-fact manner, saying that it "was as good a time as any, with new faces in the Kremlin, to start a new chapter."[47] His Minister of Foreign Affairs referred to a new trend in Soviet policy "toward enhancing stability in the Arabian Peninsula,"[48] without being more specific. Other comments by Qabus made it clear that he intended to keep the Soviet presence in Oman strictly controlled.

The intentions of the UAE were not made clear, although the trade and cultural contacts initiated before diplomatic relations were established make it likely that the Soviets will have a greater presence there. Whatever the practical consequences of the diplomatic ties, the Soviets regard them (rightly) as a psychological victory. Commentators have pointed out that even though this is a region that Washington has declared to be a zone of its national interests, "the moderate Arab countries do not believe U.S. propaganda about a Soviet threat."[49] A Pravda report claimed that diplomatic relations with Gulf countries are "a perceptible blow at the calculations of those western countries who want to distance the USSR from participation in a solution of Middle Eastern problems and to turn the region into a preserve of imperialist domination."[50] Particularly prized are endorsements of the idea of an international conference on the Middle East conflict with Soviet participation; Oman's was given at the GCC summit in November. Karen Brutents (Deputy

Head of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department) perhaps summed up Moscow's enthusiasm at the breakthrough when he pointed to it as a refutation of the late Anwar Sadat's judgement that the United States holds 99 percent of the cards needed to settle the Middle East problem.[51]

The only fly in the ointment is Saudi Arabia's refusal to cooperate despite its growing commercial connection; the Saudis, apparently using their oil to pay for Iraqi arms purchases, are now the Middle East's third-largest oil exporter to the USSR.[52] Riyadh has declared that it has no immediate plans to resume relations with the Soviet Union, but has repeated its earlier assertion that the future of relations "depends on the extent of the Soviet leadership's response to Islamic causes in Afghanistan or elsewhere."[53] (This may be a factor in recent attempts to broaden the base of Afghanistan's puppet regime.) As the period under review ended, Igor Beliaev made yet another appeal in Literaturnaia Gazeta for renewed relations, adding a new claim that the Soviet Union had once guarded Saudi Arabia from the "intrigues of the English colonialists and the Nazis."[54]

The calm public response by the GCC members to the coup in the PDRY in January 1986[55] appears to bear out the greater self-confidence with which the GCC is looking at regional affairs,[56] and possibly its greater confidence in the non-aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union. Gulf rulers are probably not happy about the departure of Ali Nasir Muhammad, whose policies toward them since 1980 had been moderate. Nevertheless, the disappearance of virtually all the old radical figures from the Aden regime, the reported crippling of the armed forces, and the PDRY's desperate need for economic assistance presage a continuing period of moderation, confirmed by the new regime's endorsement of the old foreign policy line. Moscow's apparent support of Haydar Abu Bakr

al-Attas, a moderate, to be part of the collective leadership, was appreciated in the Gulf, as was its strong stand against foreign intervention and its apparent non-participation (at least until the issue was decided).[57]

Conclusion

How far has the Soviet Union moved toward fulfilling its goals in the Gulf region after fifteen years of effort? The Gulf states are not likely to allow the United States to use their military facilities against the USSR. This, however, is only a net gain in the case of Iran (albeit an extremely important one); the other Gulf states were never likely to allow this, because of their perceptions of their own interests. On the other hand, the Soviets have not succeeded in expelling or even neutralizing Western naval presence in the Indian Ocean. U.S. influence has declined in a number of significant ways; however, the United States and other Western countries still account for the greatest share of foreign influence in the GCC, whether of a cultural, technological, economic, or military nature.

Oil has been used as a weapon with divisive results in the West, and price increases (and decreases as well) have been disruptive of Western economies. The price increases constituted a positive factor for the Soviet Union, both for the economic difficulties they caused the West, and for the increased hard currency they generated for Soviet oil exports; but Moscow has not gained any influence over Gulf oil matters, nor does it appear poised to gain concessionary rates for its East European clients.

While the Soviets have been unable to effect a decrease in Western influence, they have seen an increase in their own presence (in limited numbers thus far) and prestige, and to some extent their influence. The GCC countries

have begun to come to terms with some measure of Soviet involvement. This is partly due to the Soviet military preponderance in the region, and the GCC's greater military and political self-confidence (backed by the United States -- such are the complexities of the Gulf). However, it is more particularly due to the respective Soviet and American positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this respect, it is worth speculating on the possible effect that recently reported (November 1986) U.S.-sponsored Israeli arms shipments to Iran might have on future relations between Washington and the Gulf Arab states.

To the extent that Moscow's policies have been responsible for the improvement in its relations with the Gulf states, this has been because of its pursuit of state-to-state relations; its support of national liberation movements, even to the meager extent that occurred, was counterproductive.[58] As in other parts of the world where conditions are not ripe for revolutionary change, the Soviets have accepted the limitations of local and regional conditions, and also the opportunities provided by them. Without major assets to protect in the GCC countries, the Soviets have probed for incremental gains on which they can build, without risking a major confrontation with the United States or regional countries that could throw the two together. This course of action will likely be maintained. One must note, however, that the uncertainties in the region are still great, and the outcome of the Iran-Iraq war or further radical change in Iran could prompt changes in Soviet policy toward the GCC.

Notes

[1]Stephen Page, The Soviet Union and the Yemens: Influence in Asymmetrical Relationships (New York: Praeger, 1985), pp. 125-35.

[2]Ibid., pp. 57, 60, 171, 173-74.

[3]Ibid., pp. 184-85.

[4]As-Siyasah, 31 January 1979, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report:Middle East (hereafter cited as FBIS:ME), 2 February, 1979, p. C4.

[5]Agence France Presse, 30 December 1978, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report:USSR (hereafter cited as FBIS:USSR), 3 January 1979, pp. F11-12; Literaturnaia Gazeta, 31 January 1979; Za Rubezhom no. 21, 1979, in FBIS:USSR, 31 May 1979, p. H3; E. Primakov, Beirut Monday Morning, in FBIS:USSR, 6 July 1979, pp. 1-10.

[6]Al-Hawadith, 3 March 1979, in FBIS:ME, 5 March 1979, p. C1. However, this was not the first such Saudi comment: see King Khalid's comment to the Sunday Times quoted in FBIS:USSR, 10 July 1975, pp. F3-4.

[7]Literaturnaia Gazeta, 10 June 1979, in FBIS:USSR, 6 July 1979, pp. H10-11; Moscow radio, 29 June 1979, in FBIS:USSR, 2 July 1979, p. H1.

[8]TASS, 4 June 1979, in FBIS:USSR, 5 June 1979, p. A2.

[9]Saudi News Agency, 27 January 1980, in FBIS:ME, 28 January 1980, pp. A14-16.

[10]Qatar News Agency, 26 January 1980, in FBIS:ME, 28 January 1980, pp. C5-6; Ar-Ra'y al-Amm(Kuwait), 23 January 1980, in FBIS:ME, 24 January 1980, p. C.3.

[11]Interview in Beirut Monday Morning, 21-27 July 1980, in FBIS:ME, 28 July 1980, p. C4.

[12]Izvestiia, 26 January 1980.

[13]Pravda, 2 February 1980; Moscow radio in Arabic, 1 February 1980, in FBIS:USSR, 4 February 1980, p. H3.

[14]N. Portugalov, TASS, 29 Februry 1980, in FBIS:USSR, 3 March 1980, pp. G1-2; Moscow radio in English, 5 March 1980, in FBIS:USSR, 10 March 1980, pp. A5-6.

[15]Keith Dunn has outlined the difficulties the Soviets would face in an attack toward the Gulf, in "Soviet Strategy, Opportunities and Constraints in Southwestern Asia," Soviet Union/Union Sovietique, 11, 2 (1984):200-5. Dunn points out that existing airbases in Afghanistan are much further away than 350 miles, at the outside edges of Soviet fighter operating ranges.

[16]Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, 16 February 1980, in FBIS:USSR, 20 February 1980, p. H9.

[17]Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 32, 50 (14 January 1981), p. 6.

[18]TASS in English, 31 December 1980, in FBIS:USSR, 2 January 1981, p. CC7; V. Peresada, "On a Dangerous Course," Pravda, 10 February 1981, in FBIS:USSR, 13 February 1981, pp. H1-2.

[19]Brezhnev's arresting, although ultimately insubstantial, offer in his Congress address to link the Afghanistan question with Gulf security was also an attempt to disarm Gulf resistance to the USSR.

[20]FBIS:USSR, 29 April 1981, pp. H3-5.

[21]Al-Hadaf(Kuwait), 7 May 1981, in FBIS:ME, 13 May 1981, p. C6.

[22]This was reported by Saud al-Faisal in an interview with 'Ukaz, 26 May 1981, cited in A. Yodfat, The Soviet Union and the Arabian Peninsula (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 137.

[23]FBIS:USSR, 13 May 1981, p. H7.

[24]As-Siyasah, 4 June 1981, and Qatar News Agency, 8 June 1981, in FBIS:ME, 8 June 1981, pp. C1-2.

[25]Gulf News Agency, 8 June 1981, in FBIS:ME, 9 June 1981, p. C5.

[26]See Michael C. Dunn, "Soviet Interests in the Arabian Peninsula: The Aden Pact and Other Paper Tigers," American-Arab Affairs, no.8 (Spring 1984), pp. 92-98.

[27]A Kuwaiti military delegation was to visit the Soviet Union in September to shop for weapons after Kuwait turned down a U.S. offer to sell ground-to-air missiles; it did not.

[28]Pravda, 6 September 1981, in FBIS:USSR, 16 September 1981, pp. CC6-7; Radio Peace and Progress, 30 October 1981, in FBIS:USSR, 12 November 1981, pp. H1-2.

[29]Moscow radio in Arabic, 5/6 November 1981, in FBIS:USSR, 6 November 1981, p. H1.

[30]Moscow radio in Arabic, 3 December 1981, in FBIS:USSR, 4 December 1981, p. H1.

[31]WAKH (Manama), 13/16 December 1981, in FBIS:ME, 14 December 1981, p. C1, and 16 December 1981, p. C1. Doubt was cast on the extent of the conspiracy by Eric Rouleau in Le Monde, 4 April 1982.

[32]Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, 10 February 1982, in FBIS:USSR, 11 February 1982, p. H1.

[33]KUNA, 15 May 1982, in FBIS:ME, 17 May 1982, p. C5; Radio Monte Carlo, 30 May 1982, in FBIS:ME, 1 June 1982, pp. C1-2.

[34]Page, Soviet Union and the Yemens, pp. 146-47.

[35]KUNA, 3 December 1982, in FBIS:ME, 6 December 1982, p. H3.

[36]Little is known of the CPSA; it is tiny and almost certainly made up of expatriates, perhaps based in Aden (Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1983, p. 40). Since it is by no means a threat to the Saudi Arabian government, Soviet publicity for it was and is completely counterproductive to the apparent Soviet desire to establish good relations with Riyadh. Its appearance in Pravda on 24 February 1983, therefore, remains a mystery, perhaps one relating to the succession maneuverings in Moscow.

[37]KUNA, 3 January 1983, in FBIS:ME, 7 January 1983, pp. C2-3.

[38]Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic, 24 August 1983, in FBIS:ME, 25 August 1983, p. C1.

[39]Qatar News Agency, 27 September 1985, in FBIS:ME, 30 September 1985, p. C2.

[40]Thomas L. McNaugher, "Southwest Asia: The Crises that Never Came," in International Security Yearbook 1984/85, Barry M. Blechman and Edward N. Luttwak, ed. (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1985), p. 156.

[41]ANSA(Rome), 15 March 1984, in FBIS:ME, 16 March 1984, p. C1.

[42]KUNA, 16 April 1984, in FBIS:ME, 16 April 1984, p. C1; Ar-Riyadh, 12 April 1984, in FBIS:ME, 19 April 1984, p. C8.

[43]Moscow radio in Arabic, 17 February 1984, in FBIS:USSR, 23 February 1984, pp. H10-11; Moscow radio in Arabic, 6 May 1984, in FBIS:USSR, May 8 1984, p. H1.

[44]KUNA, 10 July 1984, in FBIS:USSR, 10 July 1984, pp. H4-5.

[45]Middle East News Agency, 4 April 1985, in FBIS:ME, 5 April 1985, p. C3.

[46]Izvestiia, 22 February 1985; Pravda, 18 July 1985; Pravda, 23 September 1985.

[47]Middle East Economic Digest, in FBIS:ME, 16 December 1985, pp. C2-3.

[48]Muscat radio, 28 September 1985, in FBIS:ME, 30 September 1985, p. C2.

[49]Moscow television, 20 November 1985, in FBIS:USSR, 22 November 1985, pp. H4-5; Moscow radio in French to the Maghreb, 18 November 1985, in FBIS:USSR, 20 November 1985, p. H5.

[50]Pravda, 18 November 1985.

[51]Al-Watan(Kuwait), 6 January 1986, in FBIS:USSR, 9 January 1986, pp. H3-15.

[52]Middle East Economic Digest, no.48 (30 November/6 December 1985), p. 11.

[53]Defence Minister Prince Sultan, quoted in SPA, 17 December 1985, in FBIS:ME, 18 December 1985, pp. C2-3.

[54]Igor Beliaev in Literaturnaia Gazeta, 12 March 1986, in The Soviet Union and the Middle East, 11, 2 (1986):14.

[55]For a brief analysis of the PDRY coup and the Soviet reaction to it, see Stephen Page, "Patterns of Soviet Activity in Southwest Asia," International Journal 41 (Spring 1986):300-23.

[56]It should be noted, however, that Ar Ra'y al-Amm reported a demand at the highest GCC levels for a freeze in Soviet-UAE and Soviet-Oman relations before they develop further. FBIS:ME, 5 February 1986, p. C1.

[57]Some Soviets did apparently participate in the fighting, and there were reports of Soviet ships giving communications assistance to the anti-Muhammad forces. I have not been able to discover whether this support was organized or (as seems more likely in the heat of the battle) was given by individual units on the spur of the moment.

[58]The Soviets may be in the process of accepting this. The 1985 Draft Program of the CPSU downgrades solidarity with national liberation movements to last place in the list of foreign policy aims.