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**Uncertain Future: A Strategic Review of the Middle**

William Wunderle
Andre Briere

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Uncertain Future: A Strategic Review of the Middle East and Implications for the United States

LTC WILLIAM WUNDERLE
U.S. Army
Washington, DC, USA

Lt COL ANDRE BRIERE
U.S. Air Force
Washington, DC, USA

America’s tendency to focus solely on military threat reduction increasingly erodes U.S. relationships with Middle East nations. As consequences of recent conflicts continue to reverberate, Iran’s influence appears to be increasing and there is growing Sunni fear of an emboldened Shia populace. This article offers a broad review of important trends in the Middle East and North Africa over the next five to seven years, identifies emerging strategic challenges, and offers a way forward for the United States. America’s foreign policies must be shaped to rely on soft power first and the use of military force only when absolutely necessary.

The recent armed conflicts between Israel, Hizballah, and Hamas, as well as continued difficulties in Iraq, presage serious consequences for U.S. foreign policy. As the Lebanese Army and the United Nations enforce a tenuous ceasefire between Hizballah and Israel, Middle East stability seems increasingly elusive. America’s tendency to focus on threat reduction (versus leveraging opportunities), coupled with its seemingly unconditional support of Israel, increasingly erodes U.S. relationships with Middle East nations throughout the region. As political consequences of the recent conflicts continue to be felt in both Israel and Lebanon, compounded by the lack of an effective U.S. Government strategic communications effort, Iran’s influence appears to be increasing and there is growing Sunni fear of an emboldened Shia populace. This article will offer a broad review of important trends in the Middle East and North Africa—both threat and opportunity—over the next five to seven years, and identify emerging strategic challenges and the resultant implications for the U.S. Government and its armed forces.

The strategic environment that influences our underlying assumptions is evolving. First, the U.S. will continue to have vital interests in the region with regard to energy resources and their effect on the global economy. However, the United States will increasingly be in competition with China and Russia over these resources and influence in the region. Second, absent a resolution of the issues driving Iran and Syria to oppose the U.S., their proxies will continue to destabilize the region, and violent Islamic extremism will remain a threat to Western nations and governments. Third, rogue states and nonstate actors will pursue weapon of mass destruction (WMD), and the U.S. will continue to oppose them. Fourth, U.S. support for Israel’s right to exist will not change, and the U.S. will continue to pursue a two-state solution to the Israel–Palestinian conflict. Extremist elements and unfriendly
governments will continue to fuel regional instability by citing the Israeli–Palestinian and Kashmir conflicts and the U.S.–Israeli relationship as a casus belli. Finally, the security situation in Iraq will remain difficult and complex as struggles over the division of political and economic power among the Iraqis continue to escalate. Using these assumptions as a basis for analysis, we will now outline some important threat trends.

Threat Trends

Middle East economies are not keeping pace with educational improvements—unemployed, educated youth are historically the most volatile and restless segment of any population. Underlying economic, demographic, and political developments have important implications for U.S. relations in the Middle East. When oil is factored out, the region has been in a steady economic decline for the past fifty years. Populations have moved from rural to urban to hyperurban settings, contributing to social challenges and the emergence of radicalism. Women are economically marginalized; therefore, half of the region’s human capital is unavailable for economically productive uses, and every country in the region faces problems with unemployment and dysfunctional education systems.¹

These social and economic problems combine to form what Thomas Friedman calls a “poverty of dignity,” wherein young Muslims are attracted to a civilization they consider morally inferior, then suffer shame due to its appeal over their own. Large masses of young, urban Muslims suffer under the yoke of 30–50 percent unemployment, with no constructive outlet to change their situation or their leaders. They are humiliated by the fact that, while having been taught that their faith is supreme, other civilizations seem to be doing much better. When this inner conflict becomes too great, humiliation (perceived or otherwise) and religious fervor is exploited by terrorist leaders to incite the sick prestige of “martyrdom” by fighting the allegedly unjust occupation of Muslim lands and the “decadence” of the West.² It is the “poverty of dignity” and the humiliation implicit in this condition that the West must address, or risk losing another generation of Muslims to the forces of radicalism.

On the strategic level, U.S. Government actions in Iraq and Afghanistan have created the ideal environment of instability for Iran to assert itself as a regional power. This is part of what has fueled Iran’s aggressive nuclear program. While Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons could be delayed by the U.S. Government through a combination of technical activities, military action, and diplomacy, such delay would not remove the underlying Iranian motivation to possess this technology.³ Short of massive military intervention and subsequent regime change, Iran will continue to pursue development of the nuclear fuel cycle. There are few benefits available or being offered to counter Iran’s perceived advantages of being a nuclear power.

Regional actors may respond to this new reality in different ways. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey will likely pursue an indigenous nuclear capability. Iraq and Syria will work to distance themselves from the U.S. while moving further into Iran’s orbit. Others will likely remain neutral or maintain the status quo while seeking U.S. or European security guarantees.

As a result of the political (and possibly) military conflict with Iran, the Shia/Sunni rivalry will gain in strength. Because Sunni nations are wary of an emboldened Shia populace, struggles (both political and religious) between these factions are likely to become the dominant issue in the Arab world over the next decade.⁴ Iran’s potential emergence as a regional hegemon will only exacerbate Sunni fears. The most important and enduring result of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq is the liberation and political empowerment of Iraq’s Shia majority. The concept of “one man, one vote” is now the battle cry of Shiites throughout the
Middle East because it assures them (by simple virtue of their majority or plurality status) control of several countries in the region and increased power in many others: Iran (90% Shia), Iraq (65%), Bahrain (75%), Azerbaijan (75%), Lebanon (45%), Kuwait (30%), and Qatar (16%).\textsuperscript{5} While Shiites traditionally revel in the notion of suffering and oppression for the sake of moral righteousness, Iraq (and recently Hizballah successes in Lebanon) has caused Shia throughout the Middle East to awaken to their latent power.\textsuperscript{6} As Vali Nasr noted, “The Middle East that will emerge from the crucible of the Iraq war may not be more democratic, but it will definitely be more Shiite.”\textsuperscript{7}

When King Abdullah of Jordan issued his now famous warning of a “Shiite Crescent” stretching from Lebanon to Iran, he was giving voice to the grave concern of Sunnis throughout the region. When U.S. and Western policymakers extol the virtues of “democracy” in Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab world, Sunni leaders see the dangers of heretical Shia ascendance. To keep the increasingly sectarian conflict currently brewing in Iraq from spilling onto other Shia-majority nations, it is imperative that U.S. political leaders balance calls for elections with the equally important need for stability. A nuclear-capable Iran (de facto or otherwise) will further embolden Shia throughout the region, who will increasingly view Iran as the authoritative center of theological and political power.

Our current emphasis on elections, even when foundational democratic institutions have not matured, complicates our position in the region and could destabilize friendly governments. Imposing democratic principles (an ironic concept) too quickly might result in what we have seen in Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority.\textsuperscript{8} Many of our allies in the Middle East prefer to focus on other areas first, such as increasing education and fighting poverty. They believe an authoritarian government is the best form to deliver these changes. They point to the success of the Chilean and Spanish model of development (dictatorial rulers directing market reforms) in contrast with the chaos and dysfunction of the “democracy first” model (post-2003 Iraq and Russia in the 1990s). It is this conflict within the U.S. foreign policy establishment between democratization (neo-Wilsonian, unstable, unpredictable) and stability (realpolitik, working with current regimes, most of which are not democratic) that inhibits the formulation of a coherent, enduring U.S. grand strategy for the broader Middle East.\textsuperscript{9} The United States’ record on human rights has, until recently been widely admired throughout the region. Indeed, its emphasis on such rights in U.S. foreign policy formed the bedrock of goodwill between “moderate” Muslim reformers and the U.S. government that has been eroded since 2003.

The broad policy questions inherent in this debate relate to the cost-benefit calculus implicit in any set of U.S. actions designed to promote democratic change. Promoting political change in friendly authoritarian states could be enormously destabilizing in the short term, particularly in the absence of democratic political alternatives and strong civil institutions.\textsuperscript{10}

Another significant threat trend is that larger proportions of regional populations will become disenfranchised and alienated from current U.S.-friendly regimes and moderate interpretations of Islam, while the revival of Islamic fundamentalism will be exploited by extremists. The loss of Afghanistan as a sanctuary and training ground has had little effect on al Qaeda operations. In fact, a catalog of attacks linked to al Qaeda since 9–11 makes it plain that a new approach by terrorists has been in effect and used with increasing frequency by al Qaeda affiliates.\textsuperscript{11} Al Qaeda has transformed into a globally distributed network with centers of gravity that are resistant to attack.\textsuperscript{12} Internet and satellite television enable its message to penetrate deep into the Muslim world. In addition to its insulated, cellular structure, al Qaeda retains access to sufficient funds to mount operations globally.
Opportunity Trends
The U.S. can counter the perception of America as a force intent on destroying Islam and enriching itself at the expense of the Muslim world. Increases in availability and penetration of information technologies mean that more people will have access to a wider variety of Western and Middle Eastern media. Media content will grow in volume and variety, and will expand across the ideological and religious spectrum—from extreme Jihadism to Western-friendly outlets. It is clear that the U.S. public diplomacy strategy is not succeeding. This is particularly important at a time when foreign governments worry that U.S. foreign policy increasingly isolates America at the government level.

The youth bulge and younger average ages in the region provide whoever wins the information war with an opportunity to influence a large majority of the regional population. Further, large segments—particularly the urban, educated, and young—will continue to seek more freedoms including those of women’s rights, freedom of the press, independent judiciaries, and representative governments.

The U.S. should recognize that a military solution alone will not defeat terrorism. Fighting poverty, improving education, and increasing the rights of women must be top priorities, while continued increases in free trade zones and other bilateral U.S. trade agreements could improve the economic outlook in selected countries in the region. There is no radical Islam—just radical pseudo-Islamic adherents. We must work to distinguish between the religion and its practitioners.

The United States could also seize the opportunity to address Iran’s underlying causes for proliferation. Iran needs to be assured that the U.S. will respect its autonomy if it ceases nuclear weapons development, while Iran’s neighbors need to be assured that Tehran will respect their interests. To mobilize all of the international actors opposing Iranian nuclear development, the U.S. must recognize that Iranian proliferation, Persian Gulf security, the U.S. role in the Middle East, Israel’s nuclear status, and Palestinian–Israeli relations are all linked and cannot be resolved without a broader and more integrated U.S. stance. Additionally, the U.S. could reinvigorate the emphasis on diplomacy to forge a common vision of a future peaceful world with the other major power brokers—the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China.

Scenarios
These assumptions and trends lead us to two possible negative scenarios, which could happen independently or concurrently.

One very real scenario is that Iran will develop a nuclear weapons capability. A nuclear-armed Iran would both increase the probability of terrorists gaining access to fissile material and embolden Tehran’s leadership in advancing its aggressive ambitions regionally and worldwide. This would increase the likelihood of the Iranian regime making serious miscalculations in confronting regional competitors like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. These destabilizing forces, combined with the fact that Iran represents an existential threat to the state of Israel, could ignite a regional crisis leading to war. More broadly, such regional conflict will cause the number of young, unemployed, religiously educated persons to continue to increase significantly across the region. All of these factors, in turn, could lead to a continued reliance on failing political and economic models and on the use of oil revenues to placate populations by governments across the region, making the implementation of long-term strategic objectives more difficult.

The second and even more dangerous future scenario could be triggered by a failure to contain the Arab (Sunni–Shia) civil conflict centering on Baghdad within Iraq—a failure
that could cause the U.S. to prematurely withdraw troops from Iraq. This could cause a further escalation of sectarian violence, resulting in civil war and the partitioning of Iraq into three autonomous states. A partitioned Iraq would further exacerbate religious tensions in the region. This would set the conditions in which victorious Shiites could establish an anti-U.S. theocratic government aligned with Iran. The consequences of this could include: Iran emerging as a regional hegemon, the emergence of an Islamic Republic of Egypt, the proliferation of WMDs to state and nonstate actors, Iranian obstruction of the free flow of energy, and, ultimately, Israel conducting unilateral strikes against Iran.

Implications

These scenarios provide a number of implications for the U.S. Government and armed forces. Although the Cold War requirement to deter potential adversaries has lessened, the United States could be on the brink of a new era of nuclear containment and deterrence in the case of Iran. Iran and Syria both remain a threat to U.S. allies and interests in the Gulf and their development of weapons of mass destruction and potential to threaten U.S. interests in Iraq are well documented.

The Long War has provided a new focus for military operations in unexpected areas. Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) has shifted the focus of force planning in the region toward Iran, and stability or “nation assistance” operations. In light of these events, the U.S. military should posture itself to support the following objectives in the Middle East: countering terrorism, deterring potential adversaries to U.S. interests in the region, reassuring regional partners, and minimizing and counteracting transitional instabilities.

Countering Terrorism

U.S. military forces will play a key role in helping to locate, track, and destroy extremist groups in the Middle East. Countering terrorism, an objective that became a top priority after September 11, 2001, requires military forces to provide surveillance of large areas and to strike quickly and surgically when called upon. Regional economic downturn and demographic pressures will lead to increasingly vast ungoverned areas, and narcotics trafficking will be used to finance terrorist movements and operations. One key operational concern in the Middle East, as in other regions, is to track potential terrorist activities in areas where the state has failed to provide adequate governance while simultaneously assisting these governments in developing their own counterterrorism capabilities. Ungoverned areas in parts of Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, and the West Bank and Gaza remain areas of concern.

The U.S. military will be required to maintain dedicated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets in the region—and analysts to assess the data those assets collect—to help local governments pursue radical jihadists in areas where the reach of those governments is weak. At times, U.S. firepower will be called upon to strike fleeting targets quickly, precisely, and with minimal collateral damage. This requirement will necessitate an increased investment in so-called “low-density, high-demand” surveillance and reconnaissance assets, as well as a full range of strike capabilities.

Deterring Potential Adversaries to U.S. Interests in the Region

Proliferation of WMD and ballistic missile technologies means that the deployment of mobile land- and sea-based missile defense systems to the region is imperative, but at the same time a widening technology gap will make interoperability more difficult between the
U.S. and its Middle East partners. Ironically, it is the U.S. dominance in precision targeting and firepower, coupled with its aversion to civilian collateral damage, that is driving potential adversaries to adopt tactics and doctrine that obviate the technological advantage of the U.S. (e.g., Hizballah’s placement of mobile missile launchers under hospitals and homes).

Direct attacks on critical energy supplies and infrastructure in Iraq and Saudi Arabia could require increased naval commitments to protect offshore platforms or escort tankers through the Straits of Hormuz and other strategic choke points. This has specific implications for the U.S. Navy (USN), including a requirement for an increased “brown water” presence in the Middle East. As a result, USN assets will be more vulnerable to asymmetric attack in the littoral zone from not only swarming small boat attacks (e.g., the Cole incident), but unmanned aircraft attacks (Hizballah already has this capability). Further, USN assets will be more vulnerable to antiship missile attacks by Iran and its proxies that possess air/subsurface/surface/ground-based antiship missiles. This brown-water presence makes the acquisition of the stealthy DD(X) and Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) critical for continued survivability of the U.S. surface fleet in the coming decades.

Reassuring Regional Friends

Military-to-military relations with key countries must be sustained and improved. Regional militaries will continue to be influential political actors across the Muslim world. New thinking will be needed to assess if, and how, U.S. military forces can aid in strengthening reform initiatives in Arab countries and dampening negative side effects. The U.S. military can make important contributions in the context of military-to-military contacts, including training, where an understanding of democratic values can be achieved.

In some countries—Pakistan, for instance—the military will likely control the state for the policy-relevant future. In Turkey and Indonesia, the military establishments are also pillars of their respective countries’ secular political institutions. Military-to-military relations, therefore, will be of particular importance to any U.S. shaping strategy in the Muslim world. U.S. legislative restrictions on military-to-military relations precipitated a serious disconnect between the United States and the military establishments in two of the most important countries in the Muslim world, Pakistan and Indonesia—a breach that will take years to repair. Rebuilding a core of U.S.-trained officers in key Muslim countries is, therefore, a critical need. Programs such as International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and Foreign Military Sale (FMS) not only ensure that future military leaders are exposed to American values, but can also translate into increased U.S. influence and access. Deployed service members should interact with local populations more frequently in the future. Area knowledge will thus become a vastly more important skill. Civil affairs are a promising area for military cooperation in countering the influence of radical Islamic networks. The U.S. could cooperate with other countries in the counternarcotics arena, while the interaction of U.S. and other countries’ militaries in the area of military medicine could be an excellent model for engagement in responding to the effects of conflict and natural disasters.

Minimizing and Counteracting Transitional Threats

Widespread support for transnational and regionally focused terrorism will continue to drive the deployment of U.S./allied forces to counter these threats. The possible failure in Iraq because of internal instability, exacerbated by external destabilizing forces, makes U.S. military intervention to sustain access to energy more likely. Reassuring regional friends of
U.S. determination to help them maintain their security against external malicious influence and aggression requires that the U.S. military remain engaged with the militaries of friendly governments.

Islamic extremists, particularly in the Middle East, have often used the U.S. military presence as a pretext for violence and the further spread of anti-American/anti-Western sentiment. Political instability in states with friendly governments like Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf States could lead to increased difficulties in issues of force protection while decreasing opportunities for U.S. basing and increasing opportunities for U.S.-supplied technologies to fall into unfriendly hands.

The Way Ahead

There are some changes to our current U.S. strategy that could enhance our ability to act. The USG:

- Should declare energy independence and alternate fuels a vital national interest and embark upon a ten-year program to make this a reality. American dependence on foreign oil jeopardizes our national security. The U.S. must increase the production of alternative fuels (including ethanol, geothermal fuel cells, solar, wind, nuclear and new cleaner coal technologies) while focusing on conservation policies and enhancing energy efficiency. As technological breakthroughs are achieved, the U.S. could leverage them to mitigate global tensions over the coming global energy shortage.
- Should employ all of the tools of statecraft and instruments of national power to markedly change the military and diplomatic options available to prevent conflict, enhance stability, and improve international cooperation while providing the resources required for increased diplomacy (FMF, economic support funds, etc.), to support these initiatives—to include dialogue with Iran and Syria. Further, the U.S. must align foreign assistance resources to a coherent national strategy and its foreign policy priorities. Current FMF and IMET funding and allocation do not necessarily match the U.S. Government’s articulated foreign policy priorities. For example, the U.S. Government was hard pressed to provide immediate assistance to United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) or the Government of Lebanon, even though this aid was publicly committed by the president (this is an authorities issue versus a priorities issue).
- Should reassure our allies and regional partners through declaratory security guarantees and assurances, thus blunting the threat posed by Iran.
- Should reinvigorate the Middle East peace process to remove the view (prevalent in the region) that the U.S. does not consider resolution of the conflict important.
- Must develop a strategy to counter the sources of Islamic Jihad to include Wahhabi, Muslim Brotherhood, and Iranian jihadic teaching in universities and mosques throughout the region.
- Should increase its “cultural intelligence quotient.” While the relative shortage of Arab specialists in military and intelligence positions is well known, there is huge lack of cultural understanding among government officials, political leadership, and the general American public. The wider need for regional specialists writ large—both military and civilian—must be addressed. The armed forces should consider the development of a new breed of airman, sailor, and soldier who has substantial familiarity with local customs, language, and history as a “core competency,” along with traditional warfighting prowess. They should reevaluate the recent trend to
reduce the numbers of forces forward stationed, living in foreign countries and
gaining a great deal of cultural understanding.

- Should place equal emphasis on the promotion of human rights and democracy, and
  the political stability required to further these aims. The USG should also closely
  examine current programs to ensure there is proper emphasis on developing foun-
dational democratic institutions via elections. Also, by increased cultural exchange,
  and ensuring our actions and values remain consonant, help people to thirst for
democracy, rather than trying to pressure nations to democratize.

- Should increase its diplomatic options to make nonmilitary pressure possible by
  reestablishing diplomatic presence in countries where we currently have none such
  as Iran, while also returning the U.S. ambassador to Syria. We should identify
  areas of shared interest where we can engage these countries at a variety of levels.
  Examples include counternarcotics, land and maritime boundaries, overflight rights,
  consequence management, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance.

- Should work to reduce the more obvious and politically sensitive aspects of its
  forward military presence while working to increase different types of presence
  (e.g., intelligence, psychological operations, and civil affairs) and instead seek to
  support operations from consolidated regional locations (much of this is already
  being done through the Department of Defense’s global basing initiatives).

- Should build “partner nation” capacity and posture the U.S. military for the Long War.
  The acknowledged key to success in the Long War is building and supporting partner-
nation capacity to contribute to the Global War on Terrorism. An integral component
  of building partner capacity is expanding the U.S. military training infrastructure
  and reallocating personnel resources to this end.

Conclusion

Meeting these objectives will require U.S. military forces to maintain a substantial forward
posture. The U.S. will continue to be engaged in the region and, at the same time, will
continue to be resented.

As Americans, we tend think of the “Arab World” as being monolithic. We sometimes
need to be reminded that this community is richly diverse culturally, historically, geograph-
ically, economically, politically, demographically, and even religiously. While Iraq, Iran,
Syria, and the Palestinian Authority (along with Israel) dominate our foreign policy agenda
in this region, by failing to focus on the differences between these countries instead of what
unites them—Islam—we are losing opportunities to strengthen relationships with countries
that are eager to be closer to the United States. While Iraq remains a dominant focus of
the U.S., other countries do not want the present conflict to define their relations with us.
Because of this, these issues cannot be considered in isolation, but must be viewed with
an eye toward understanding their implications for the region as a whole and exploring the
broader consequences for American policy.

While the trends discussed above do not look promising, they are not a forgone conclu-
sion. The U.S. Government should develop a holistic regional strategy that takes a longer
view. This should include a more integrated approach that utilizes all the elements of na-
tional power in a coordinated fashion. Finally, a note of caution: we should not overestimate
what U.S. military forces can do. As such, “America’s foreign policies must be shaped to
rely on soft power first and the use of military force only when absolutely necessary.”
America’s military is very capable and very dedicated, but there are other instruments of
national power that must be wielded. The military by itself can accomplish much, but many
problems require the application of other elements of national power, or the combined
effects of our diplomatic, economic, and informational capabilities. Often, the nonmilitary
elements of our national power can be the most effective.

Notes

15, 2005.
3. George Perkovich, “Iran is Not an Island: A Strategy to Mobilize the Neighbors,” Policy
4. The majority of the world’s Muslims are Sunni, but a significant minority, about 15 percent
of the global Muslim population, is Shiite.
6. The concept of enduring suffering and death for the sake of moral righteousness is a key part
of Shiism and has been ritualized in annual mourning ceremonies commemorating Imam Husayn’s
heroic death at Karbala in 680 A.D. that include marches, reenactments, and self-flagellation.
8. Lebanon is essentially a nonstate, for which Hizballah performs state functions (especially
in the south), which include providing and social services for its constituents. The January 2005
Palestinian Authority elections resulted in Hamas—designated by the Secretary of State as a Foreign
Terrorist Organization—being elected to lead the Palestinian Authority with the consequence being
a government that is not recognized by the U.S. (or Israel) and near-total financial and economic
isolation by the international community.
9. There is a fundamental conflict between the realist and idealist schools of U.S. foreign policy,
as well as between advocates of confrontationalist vs. gradualist implementation.
11. Since attacking America on 9–11, al-Qaeda–linked groups and individuals have been involved in at least fifteen different attacks. They have hit at groups of Germans (in Tunisia), French (in
Karachi, Pakistan), Spaniards (in Madrid), Britons (in Turkey and Bali, Indonesia), Australians (in
Bali), Pakistanis (in Pakistan), Turks (in Turkey), Saudis (in Saudi Arabia), and Jews (in Morocco,
Turkey, and Tunisia).
12. David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime,
and Militancy (RAND Corporation, 2001).
13. George Perkovich, “Iran is Not an Island: A Strategy to Mobilize the Neighbors,’ Policy
14. Since the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq had been the object of one of two major theater scenarios
that drove the shape and size of U.S. military force structure and had constituted a central
focus of force planning.
16. Brown-water navy is a term that originated in the United States Navy, referring to the small
gunboats and patrol boats used in rivers. A broader meaning in this article is any naval force that has
the capacity to carry out military operations in riverine or littoral environments. Being a brown-water
navy does not imply that it lacks offensive capability, as many small littoral-combat ships today are
armed with powerful antiship missiles.
17. Iran has several Russian-supplied systems specifically designed to defeat Aegis and the
Phalanx point defense system (SS-N-22 SUNBURN and SS-NX-26 YAKOUTS).
18. The Pressler Amendment, enacted in 1985, specifically prohibited U.S. assistance or mili-
tary sales to Pakistan unless annual presidential certification was issued that Pakistan did not possess a
nuclear explosive device. The Leahy Amendment imposes restrictions on providing funds to any unit
of the security forces of a foreign country that has gross violations of human rights, unless the foreign
government is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice.


20. While the U.S does have a diplomatic presence in Syria, there is no ambassador. There is a charge d’affaires and a full embassy staff.
