

2012

H-Diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review

www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables

Volume XIV, No. 9 (2012)

26 November 2012

Roundtable Editors: Jonathan Winkler and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable Web/Production Editor: George Fujii

Commissioned for H-Diplo by Jonathan Winkler
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Jeffrey R. Macris. *The Politics and Security of the Gulf: Anglo-American Hegemony and the Shaping of a Region*. New York: Routledge, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-415-77871-8 (paper, \$44.95).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIV-9.pdf>

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Introduction by Jonathan Reed Winkler, Wright State University

Though a larger war continues in several other locations, the final withdrawal of United States combat forces from Iraq in December 2011 brought to a close one of the longest-running military theaters the United States has entered. But the U.S. military has not left the Persian Gulf. The U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet remains headquartered in Bahrain, and U.S. Central Command maintains its forward base at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. In light of the tensions with Iran over its nuclear program and its January 2012 threats to close the Straits of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf, U.S. military involvement in the region is certain not to end in the near term but will remain a key component of regional diplomacy for some time to come.

How did the United States get to this point? The immediate explanations, of course, draw from the 2001 terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, however one connects the two. But no explanation of Iraq in 2003 is satisfactory without going back to 1990-1991, and doing *that* necessitates at least a mention of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the Carter Doctrine and the Iranian revolution of 1979. And, of course, the novelty of the Carter Doctrine comes from the comparatively minor political and military involvement by the U.S. in the Gulf prior to 1979—a point that frequently leaves today's students (whose formative years are after 2001) baffled that there would be some part of the world in which the U.S. had not been actively involved.

There is no shortage of scholarly literature on Persian Gulf-area politics and U.S. relations with particular countries in the region. The focus of this body of work, however, is largely on bilateral relations, the importance of petroleum, or the larger Near East/Southwest Asia region beyond just the Gulf. The conventional perception largely holds that the U.S. discovered the Persian Gulf in World War II, but kept its postwar relationship confined largely to petroleum extraction from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq while Britain remained the dominant power in the Gulf region through the 1960s. Accordingly, the U.S. only became more involved in the region in the late 1970s with the Carter Doctrine, and intensified its involvement in the decades since then. Detailed analyses of the U.S. military interactions with the Gulf region itself, aside from the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991, are comparatively few in number. This is remarkable given the longstanding presence of the U.S. Navy in the region, the ongoing role of naval officers as diplomats, and the importance of the maritime trade that flows through the Gulf and around the Arabian peninsula.

Motivated by this gap in the literature and his own experiences in the region, Jeffrey R. Macris, a Permanent Military Professor at the United States Naval Academy, has crafted a narrative overview of the evolution of first British and then United States military involvement in the region since the early nineteenth century. Deliberately eschewing a focused analysis and interpretation of particular incidents in the region, Captain Macris sought to bridge several different disciplines in an attempt to answer questions about the long-term military engagement of these two powers with the Gulf. Several concerns drove his inquiry, including why British and the U.S. military forces (rather than diplomats alone) were drawn to the Gulf region, how these successive powers used military force to

maintain order and protect their strategic interests there, the causes of the British disengagement with the region and the reluctance of the U.S. to enter it militarily, and the similarities and differences between U.S. and British aims in the Gulf.

The reviewers are generally in praise of the coverage Macris offers of the post-World War II period and the emphasis on security, though they wish that he had explored certain aspects in greater detail or with a closer eye to the larger contextual connections to issues outside of the region. As the U.S. enters a new era of military realignment and fiscal austerity, the issues of naval diplomacy, maritime security, power projection, and the temptations of military withdrawal that are raised in this work are ones that American leaders will have to consider carefully.

Participants:

Captain Jeffrey R. Macris, USN is a Permanent Military Professor at the United States Naval Academy, where he teaches Middle Eastern history and military history. He holds a Ph.D. in Middle East Studies from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, as well as a linguist certificate in Arabic from the Defense Language Institute. A resident of the Persian Gulf for many years, he has travelled extensively in the region and served as officer-in-charge of an operational U.S. Navy aviation squadron detachment in Bahrain.

Jonathan Reed Winkler is Associate Professor of History at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. He is a historian of U.S. diplomatic, military and naval history, and international affairs in the modern era. He is the author of *Nexus: Strategic Communications and American Security in World War I* (Harvard, 2008). He is presently working on a book-length examination of U.S. national security policy and international communications technology across the twentieth century.

Simon Davis is Associate Professor of History at Bronx Community College, City University of New York. He is a historian of the Persian Gulf, imperialism and colonialism, transnational and global history. He is the author of *Contested Space: Anglo-American Relations in the Persian Gulf, 1939-1947* (Brill, 2009).

Mark Rice was most recently an instructor at Minnesota State University, Mankato. He holds a doctoral degree in history from the Ohio State University, with a field in diplomatic and international history. His dissertation is entitled "The Alliance City: NATO and Berlin, 1958-1963." He received his M.A. degree from Ohio University, through the Contemporary History Institute, and his B.A. (Honours) from the University of Toronto.

David F. Winkler is the Historian with the Naval Historical Foundation in Washington, D.C. A specialist on the Cold War, he is the author of several historical studies for the Department of Defense, including *Amirs, Admirals, and Desert Sailors: Bahrain, the U.S. Navy, and the Arabian Gulf* (Naval Institute Press, 2007). A retired U.S. naval reserve officer, he received his Ph.D. from American University in 1998.

The scholarly field embraced by this lively synthesis is busy, presently crossing into the 1970s, facilitated by arbitrary British and United States declassification schedules and the subsequent 'race to the archives'. The resultant source-bound redactions tend to privilege post-war British high official mentalities, which in turn has preserved the conceit of an 'Anglo-American Middle East'. Jeffrey R. Macris's book has this tendency, despite strong evidence, particularly economic and US ideological, that this idea was a naïve if not deluded British hope. Post-Second World War British elite overtures aimed at regenerating Britain's hegemony (with American help) were admittedly persistent. But they foundered, in all but contingent military respects, against steadfast American refusal to embrace full-scale political, economic, and regional system building, both in the Persian Gulf and the wider global periphery. Commander Macris's main aim is to seek instructive indications in British experience for future American methods of securing key Persian Gulf interests. But to put this beyond the realm of constructive anachronism demands recognition of why, essentially, British pre-eminence was so inimical to American overseas policy that, despite some Vietnam-era separation anxiety, it was cut loose in favor of prime security relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia, whatever this may ultimately have entailed.

In many respects, how and why the British empire worked is indeed instructive for American policy-makers, but mostly to show how, in a cautionary sense, redemptive self-projection abroad so easily metamorphoses into various forms of antagonistic encumbrance. Current meditations on the meanings of empire, from right and left, embrace a wide array of metropolitan, colonizer, subaltern, cultural, economic, ideological and geographic perspectives.¹ Macris sticks to politics and security, which are but two relevant analytical themes, albeit in need of new thinking. These themes however are the ones most frequently dismissed in current post-colonial scholarship as reactionary and inauthentic to the processes experienced by the imperialized 'other', whose voices should be traced and included uppermost, if real understanding is to follow. The key to the American epiphany on the Persian Gulf, during the Second World War, is nonetheless opposition to Britain's plans for a comprehensive and radical integration of strategic hegemony with political, economic and social 'guided development. By 1971 the latter had evaporated for lack of the U.S. underwriting which Britain had solicited in various forms since the days of Lend Lease. American forms of influence were deliberately less formal than British. But by 1991, and again in 2003, these forms of influence nonetheless required armed intervention to sustain. Macris explores how, from the late eighteenth century until 1971, British dominance at limited liability might suggest a model for future United States engagement.

¹ See Robin Butlin, *Geographies of Empire: European Empires and Colonies c.1880-1960*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); V. Chaturvedi, (ed.) *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Post-Colonial*, (London: Verso, 2000); Niall Ferguson, *Empire: the Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, (London: Allen Lane, 2002); Fawaz Gerges, 'The Study of Middle East International Relations: a Critique', *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, 18, 2, (1991); Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

But, to recapitulate, relatively few imperialisms are compatible. Indeed, mutual competition is in their nature, unless they are faced with a greater common threat. This is the anchor of currently- prevalent ideas of a post-war 'Anglo-American Middle East'. Both powers are portrayed in most discussions on the cold war-era² as combining against the elective affinity of Soviet intrusion and radicalized national liberation. The Americans supposedly welcomed Britain as a senior partner that would preserve the Persian Gulf for the West at minimum risk to themselves. Yet, with Communist influence being generally insignificant in the Middle East, and a substantive Soviet presence late, uneven and ephemeral, such orthodoxies hide in plain sight the demise of regionally integrative, sterling-based British neo-imperialism. The latter project has now almost been forgotten because of the very totality of its extinction - in favor of US-mandated nation-building (or at least nation-state fabrication) and multilateral relations within what American visionaries, from the era of Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush, lauded in varying words as a new international order based on expectations for a 'free world'.

The compelling historical question is not how Britain and the United States formed a condominium against a barely-existent Soviet threat - which they did not. Rather, it is how local rulers disengaged from British tutelage to seek modernized sovereignty and legitimacy on less subordinated American terms. American encouragement for a residual British military presence coinciding with 'overstretch' in Korea and Vietnam, never extended to, and indeed categorically disavowed, British schemes for post-colonial civil and developmental patronage. Later, unforeseen disequilibria, sub-(and supra) national resistance and local inter-state conflicts, as Commander Macris shows, drew in the United States, against its oft-repeated better judgment. But American policy did not embrace British imperialist methods. Rather, it advanced heterogeneous desiderata for a new liberal capitalist world order, ending old European empires, as triumphantly celebrated in the months between the Eastern bloc's collapse and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. In entering the same geographic space as Britain's erstwhile sphere, and having superficially similar interest in oil, finance, and political intimacy with the Persian Gulf's dynastic rulers, U.S. engagement has invariably been identified with British imperial mentalities and functions - an 'American Orientalism'. This, simply put, is wrong: the sine qua non of American internationalism was to dismantle any British control over Persian Gulf relations

² Steve Marsh, *Anglo-American Relations and Cold War Oil: Crisis in Iran*, (Basingstoke, 2003), 3-7, 52; Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York, 1988), 13, 18-32. On the West versus radical-Soviet 'elective affinity' see David Painter, 'Explaining US Relations with the Third World', *Diplomatic History*, 19, (1995), 525-48. Also, David R. Devereux, *Formulation of British Defence Policy towards the Middle East, 1948-1956* (New York, 1990), 12-13, 15, 19; Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991), 19, 49-55; Mary Ann Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950-1954* (New York, 1997), 3, 8, 9, sees US support for Britain against Iran; Charles Kupchan, *The Persian Gulf and the West: The Dilemmas of Security* (Boston, 1987), 10-43; Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), 4-8, 11, 119-23; W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region* (Basingstoke, 2008) 11, 201-8.

with the world at large and any exclusionary and locally prejudicial constraints thereby entailed.

Yet a beguiling irony, signified in the Persian Gulf by its withdrawal of standing armed forces in 1971, followed Britain's painful divestiture from the trappings, harness and servants of formal empire, which was signified in the Persian Gulf by its withdrawal of standing armed forces in 1971. By this time related units, bases, and protectorates had long been an economically disembodied and politically irrelevant rump. But, thereafter, British influence and interests mounted a remarkable, not to say profitable, comeback. This was, however, under the 'open door' terms of reference set by the Americans. Britain did trade on past acquaintance with princely regimes but more as finance broker, real estate developer, and court bouncer than as hegemon. A buccaneering City of London spirit, transmitted to peripheral out-stations, revived the 'gentlemanly capitalism' of pre-colonial British imperialism in and around the Indian Ocean basin. Nonetheless, as Macris shows, essential Persian Gulf security had to be underwritten by United States military resources and American willingness to commit them. Moreover, this congenial role-reversal sometimes required Britain to deploy force contingents as loss-leaders sufficient to encourage the United States beyond hitherto dubious thresholds of intervention. How such capabilities will survive the current fiscal crisis and strategic defence reviews may signify the true ending, with a whimper, of British imperialism, long past the colonial empire's end.

Seeing longer-term currents over momentary official discourse is crucial to establishing the context and implications for contemporary political choices. Macris's book attempts this by surveying British experience in the Persian Gulf since the 1790s, then American engagement after the Second World War. Everyone who reads it will discover new things, its pertinent and exciting archive photographs being but one example. On the other hand, the book can be narrow in its secondary source synthesis and theoretical scope. It should probably be read alongside recent works by James Onley and Robert Blyth. They emphasize the quasi-autonomous Indian orientation of the British presence, and its material minimalism, rather than coherent grand designs directed from London³. Macris also rehearses certain commonplaces which it is the historian's duty to debunk: he writes that Indian forces upheld British Middle Eastern security [pp. 5, 24-27, 33, 88, 247] (true to a point, but they were largely withheld from systemically significant roles in peacetime outside India after 1921, leaving the way open for Royal Air Force airpower); he also asserts that Nazi Germany [pp. 39-40] saw the Middle East as a grand strategic objective (Hitler was half-heartedly drawn in by Italian failure and tried to restrain Rommel's quixotic ambitions once in); he goes on to imply the early Cold War [pp. 83-86] as replicating the Kipling-era Anglo-Russian great game (here Britain initially sought pragmatic deals with Stalin on demarcated spheres of influence, notably in Iran in 1945-46, until the Truman administration vetoed such horse-trading on the principle of preserving Iranian nation-statehood against all comers); finally, he comments [p.169] that the British

³ James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the Nineteenth Century Gulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Robert Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

intelligence and special forces' role in putting Sultan Qaboos on Oman's throne in 1970 is not clear in existing literature (-it is).⁴

Without going through every point, the book's omissions are most notable with respect to indigenous Gulf affairs, imperial history writ large, deeper reference to economic, social and cultural formation, and the role of other great powers, for example China, which in showing itself eager to play a role in the concluding phases of the Iran-Iraq War, was instrumental in accelerating pre-emptive US Naval commitment to the defense of Kuwaiti merchant shipping, thereby averting both the collapse of Iraq and Iran's impending victory. Overall, the book resembles a transcribed lecture series - full of fascinating nuggets, and very good on naval issues and on micro-experience, for example from Royal Naval logbooks and Britain's Gulf agencies. Rather than addressing 'Anglo-American hegemony' it discretely surveys Britain's heyday and departure, announced in 1968, posits a 'chaotic interregnum' between 1972 and 1991, and then, in comparably discrete terms, sometimes very anecdotal, examines United States regional peacemaking thereafter. Having advanced nation-building and multilateralism, U.S. fortunes are described as being thereby put, with grave consequences, at the mercy of Persian Gulf client-allies who were vulnerable to knowable but underestimated indigenous challenges.. This seems right, as is Macris's follow-up on the imperceptive, doctrinaire U.S. techniques used in the region, which culminated in renewed war in 2003 and its entangling, troubled aftermath.

For Macris a better posture than the ponderous standing forces retained after Desert Storm would be, like the one he attributes to Britain, a discreet diplomatic presence, a big stick over the horizon in the form of the U.S. Navy, with prepositioned resources near potential intervention points. This formula will doubtless be advanced by the Navy and its friends, post-Iraq. Citing Britain's 1961 'Operation Vantage' in Kuwait as an example to follow, Macris implies not so much that U.S. approaches resemble those of the British but that they should. Whether this could adequately redress shifting macro-level and local currents on terms favorable to the United States as the 'last superpower' may be something of a great white hope. Britain has been subject since 1945 to diminishing military and political returns in the global periphery. It responded, perforce, by informalizing its presence. Profitable intercourse was sustained by developing commonality with collaborative elements at all levels, setting up institutions that were integrated with British interests, which were themselves culturally reconstructed around political-economic partnerships with various 'others', even in the metropolis itself, on relatively pragmatic terms: some old friends were abandoned. In this context, the main American problem might be less that of overseas threats than domestically-internalized ideologies on the world and how to address it.

⁴ On Oman, Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Inside the Covert world of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2000), 729-734.

Review by Mark Rice, Minnesota State University, Mankato

It is at once both refreshing and perplexing for a book of diplomatic history to have the phrase Anglo-American in its title without the phrase “Special Relationship” appearing in the text. Refreshing because it seems as though authors who write about diplomacy involving the two countries feel the need to emphasize the specialness of the relationship, even when it does not seem so special. And perplexing because it would seem that the subject of Jeffrey Macris’ *The Politics and Security of the Gulf* would be perfectly suited for an examination of the Special Relationship, given the close cooperation of Britain and the United States in the Persian Gulf region. Yet Macris’ study of the role of the Anglo-American hegemony in the Gulf from the nineteenth century on focuses more on the tensions between the powers, especially as the British Empire declined and left a vacuum in the Gulf in the face of the Soviet Cold War threat. *The Politics and Security of the Gulf* provides an analysis of British and American involvement that gets beyond each national story, and looks at the combination of interests that produced a hegemonic relationship between the West and the Middle East.

The book’s strongest point is its scope. Rather than focusing on particular key events in the region, Macris takes a wide view of the history of Anglo-American involvement in the Persian Gulf, beginning with the early British incursions as part of the protection of their communications with India, and continuing up to the present-day wars on terrorism and in Iraq. This scope allows Macris to draw out his main ideas, particularly those that concern the stabilizing effect of British (and later) American intervention among the Gulf nations. By combining diplomatic skill, political incentives (often in the form of treaties), and occasionally naval force, Britain was able to eliminate piracy and other lawless activities, reduce discord between the various tribes along the Gulf coast, and establish protectorates that provided British interests (especially oil interests starting at the turn of the twentieth century) with the stability they needed (12-13, 22). By the time the American government began to increase its involvement during the Second World War, Britain had already developed a set of practices and institutions that supported and perpetuated that stability – practices and institutions that could conflict with American ideas and approaches (43).

The main focus of the book, though, is on the post-war period, when Britain found itself retreating from its empire, and the United States found itself expanding its influence in order to contain Soviet communism. The growing need for Mid-East oil and the desire to keep the Soviet Union from interfering in its supply to the West meant that as the British Empire retreated, the stability it had created in the Persian Gulf was still necessary, and thus both Britain and the United States saw a continued British role as vital (82). The costs of that role, however, were not small, and they climbed as elements within the region rebelled against the British presence through the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, by the end of the 1960s, the British government had come to the conclusion that it could not remain East of Suez, a decision that surprised and upset both the Americans and the local rulers in the Gulf.

With the United States mired in Vietnam and reluctant to pick up any new commitments, the vacuum left by the British withdrawal in 1971 remained unfilled for nearly twenty years (202). It is in this period that Macris finds the strongest confirmation of the need for outside hegemony in the Persian Gulf. He argues that the disorder and instability that the British left behind unsettled the region, leading to the oil shocks of the 1970s, the fall of the Shah in Iran, the Iran-Iraq War, and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It was only once the United States decided to reestablish the hegemony, under its leadership, that stability returned to the Persian Gulf (235-236). American hegemony therefore has to continue in order to prevent another "chaotic interregnum" from throwing the region into turmoil once again.

Macris makes good use of sources, digging particularly deeply into the British and American national archives, and supplementing them with published documents from Gulf countries. He also draws on his own experiences serving as a naval officer in the region, giving his arguments a unique and effective perspective on the issues. Drawing on these sources allows Macris to offer a strong analysis of the reasons and methods behind the Anglo-American hegemony. Moving beyond the standard view centered on the importance of oil, Macris emphasizes that neither Britain nor the United States sought to dominate the Gulf and its resources as heavily as they did (and do). Instead, the British sent their first warships and diplomats into the region because piracy and disorder were threatening the trade routes through the Suez Canal to India. (12-13) For much of their time there, the British resisted getting too deeply involved in local affairs, preferring to use local residents and the occasional military expedition to keep order. Likewise, once the British departed, the Americans were reluctant to control the region directly, preferring to rely on Iran and Saudi Arabia as the local policemen under the Nixon Doctrine. (174-175) Yet the importance of the region, in particular its oil, meant that neither Britain nor the United States could completely neglect their roles in the Gulf, and when necessary, they were ready to step in to maintain the requisite security. By focusing his story more on security than on oil, Macris is able to add complexity to his analysis of the development of the Anglo-American hegemony.

Yet the focus on security also overshadows other aspects of the involvement, namely the negative side of the hegemonic relationship. Certainly, Macris covers the conflict between nationalist groups throughout the larger Middle East region, and the difficulties that they posed for British authorities through the 1950s and 1960s. Macris' view of the British presence in the Gulf is almost entirely positive; the British provided security, prosperity, and other benefits like education. That positive view, however, runs counter to how many residents of the region regarded the British, and often the Americans, and was itself the cause of considerable instability, instability that Macris curiously de-emphasizes. For example, the British campaign to hold on to Aden against nationalists in Yemen shared many characteristics of other brutal colonial campaigns of the time, yet Macris barely mentions the conduct of the Yemeni campaign. (133-134) Similarly, he downplays issues like racism among British officials. This view of British colonialism runs counter to the current historiography that highlights the endemic racism, paternalism, and exploitation

that often defined the British presence in places like India, Africa, and the Persian Gulf.¹ If Macris were to extend his view of British imperialism beyond its role in security, he would likely find a more nuanced appreciation of the difficulties that the British faced in trying to hold the area East of Suez.

Macris' book is aimed at providing readers with a greater understanding of the history of the Persian Gulf, and how the two powers shaped the region. (2) Since it is unlikely that the West will stop having a role in the Persian Gulf in the near future, he includes some policy advice for Anglo-American leaders in the twenty-first century, based on British success before World War II and American success between the Gulf War and September 11. His general recommendation of keeping a modest naval force in the region while being prepared to use heavier ground forces if necessary sounds both prudent and effective, however, it is unclear whether what worked for Britain under the Empire would work for the United States in a globalized century. For example, his recommendations overlook one of his most cogent arguments expressed earlier in the book, when he notes that much of the rise of anti-British nationalism came in the wake of significant demographic changes in the countries surrounding the Gulf, when they went from small, mostly illiterate populations to large, educated, and more prosperous ones (119-121). One wonders how the United States would be able to imitate the role of the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – when populations numbered in the tens of thousands – in the twenty-first century, when populations number in the millions. If the American presence in the Gulf becomes too imperial, local opinion may turn against it no matter how much security it provides, and American leaders may face the same consequences that British leaders did.

Still, *The Politics and Security of the Gulf* is focused on security issues, and there it excels. Macris fully appreciates the local conditions that both drew in and forced out the British and Americans. His analysis of the relationship between British imperialism in India and that in the Persian Gulf reveals a crucial path not taken by British leaders after World War II, and allows him to offer trenchant criticism for their not having taken that path. Finally, he recognizes that while ensuring stability in the Gulf was never easy, nor will it be in the future, it was often necessary, and will certainly be so in the twenty-first century as well.

¹ See for example, Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 505-515, including far more detailed coverage of Britain's campaign against nationalists in Aden.

When I was recalled to active duty in 1998 by Commander Fifth Fleet to write a study on the history of the Navy in Bahrain,¹ (I sought out a good macro-history of great power involvement in the Gulf. The best I could find was Michael A. Palmer's *On Course to Desert Storm: The United States in the Persian Gulf*,² published in 1992 by the Naval Historical Center.

Jeffrey R. Macris, a professor of history at the United States Naval Academy, has done much to fill a void with *Politics and Security of the Gulf: Anglo-American Hegemony and the Shaping of a Region*. Of course, with the sun never setting on the British Empire in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, and the subsequent rise of American power, the book's sub-title could apply to several other areas of the globe!

This fairly comprehensive overview of British and American involvement in the Gulf follows a traditional political-military perspective drawn mostly from archival and previously published sources within the two subject nations. Macris does not seem to have done interviews which could have provided additional insights for the concluding chapters where many sources are still classified. There is very little input from the Persian or Arab perspective.

He uses a chronological approach using seven chapters with the first chapter covering the British legacy in the Gulf up until World War II. That only a dozen pages cover British activity in the nineteenth century is by far the book's biggest disappointment. Basically, Macris argues that the British successfully maintained order in the Gulf with nominal sea power which drew upon colonial forces from India. Besides not providing a more detailed historical narrative about British naval and diplomatic actions, Macris misses an opportunity to provide additional background on the various ruling families in the region that would rule various states in the twentieth century.

Discussion of American involvement is limited. There is no mention of American naval activities in the region such as arrival of USS *Peacock* and USS *Boxer* at Muscat to negotiate a treaty on September 21, 1833 establishing diplomat ties, or Persian attempts in 1855 to negotiate a treaty that called for American protection of Persian shipping and coastlines. Macris notes the presence of missionaries in passing. Michael B. Oren's *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East – 1776 to the Present*³ does an admirable job in detailing

¹ The book was eventually published in 2007 by the Naval Institute under the title *Amirs, Admirals and Desert Sailors*.

² Michael A. Palmer, *On Course to Desert Storm: The United States in the Persian Gulf* (Naval Historical Center, 1992).

³ Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East – 1776 to the Present* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2007).

the work of these missionaries in the establishment of educational and medical institutions in the region (the American University Cairo, Beirut; the American Missionary Hospital in Bahrain, etc.) that would foster independent intellectual thinking that would become the underpinning of nationalists movements. Oren's work, which is not cited in the Macris bibliography, was thin in its post-1950 coverage. In contrast, Macris's narrative from World War II into the 1990s is this book's strength.

As the U.S. Marines demonstrated sixty years ago at the Chosin Reservoir, retreat is one of the more difficult and challenging of military maneuvers. Thus, Macris's chapter "Britain births a new Gulf order, 1968-71" covering the British departure from "East of Suez" gets high marks for offering an overview of the challenges that followed the 1968 withdrawal announcement. Overall, Britain did about as much as it could to leave the region in some semblance of order.

Over a decade ago when I interviewed Vice Admiral Marmaduke G. Bayne, the Middle East Force Commander who in 1971 negotiated for facilities in Bahrain at the former HMS Juffair and at the airport, about the American position during this time period, he explained that the three courses of action the United States could have taken were either to withdraw with the British, maintain a minimal presence, or fill the void left by the British. As Macris documents, the United States chose the second option due to other global commitments and the hope that Iran and Saudi Arabia could serve as American proxies in the region. Bayne would argue that in retrospect, the United States should have immediately moved to fill the void. As it was, the arrival of USS *LaSalle* represented a significant upgrade as the Middle East Force Flagship, and the French Navy also contributed to a western naval presence in the region.

Bayne claimed that the accomplishment he was most proud of was giving solid footing to the Bahrain International School as a Department of Defense-run institution that would not only educate the dependents of sailors assigned to the Middle East, but would educate many of the elites of the region. "In my opinion it was far more important to establish that school as an American-run school exerting foundational American culture in the region through education than running a few destroyers around the Gulf and Indian Ocean."⁴

Bayne may have been correct. Later in the narrative, Macris argues that the ruling Khalifa family can point to the American presence in Bahrain as helping to bolster their Sunnifamily-led rule over a Shia majority population. However, it could also be argued that the American presence and support for institutions such as The Bahrain International School have helped to foster democratic reforms. Educated at the Bahrain International School and in the United States and Britain, the current Crown Prince Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa appreciates the tenets of democracy and has become a pivotal character in the ongoing dialogue that pits his aging grand-uncle, the Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifah,

⁴ Personal interview by David Winkler with Vice Admiral Marmaduke G. Bayne, USN (retired), 16 July and 26 August 1998.

against a populace that had hoped that the National Action Charter approved in 2001 would give them a greater say in their governance.

It has been said that the presence of the school was one of the reasons that the Bahrainis were reluctant to evict the Americans in the 1970s. Eventually, the Americans were evicted – on paper. However, the facilities remained as a ‘secret base’ under the innocuous title “Administrative Support Unit” [(ASU) – dubbed by sailors as “Alcohol Support Unit”] and the school remained.

Although Macris seems to minimize this presence, claiming that the U.S. had no bases in the Gulf during the 1980s, the fact remains that without the American facilities in Bahrain – especially at the Bahrain International Airport which hosted a helicopter detachment known as the Desert Ducks – it would have been almost impossible to have sustained the “Earnest Will” convoy escort operations.

Macris skillfully summarizes events in the region from Desert Storm to the present with mention of the rise of anti-American resentment in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s that led to two major bombings and the rise of Al Qaeda. The attack on USS *Cole* in October 2000 at Aden is a glaring omission to an otherwise comprehensive treatment of the period. Bringing the book’s narrative up to the present and offering analytical historical perspective on current events does cause this historian to wince. Up until the 1970s, the 1953 ouster of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran was touted as one of the Eisenhower administration’s greater accomplishments -- after 1979 that view changed. Clearly, the jury is out on Iraq and Afghanistan.

Author's Response by Jeffrey R. Macris, United States Naval Academy

First, a gracious thanks to Professor Jonathan Winkler for selecting this book for an H-Diplo roundtable review, and to Drs. Davis, Rice, and Winkler for their thoughtful comments. Their critiques were thorough, fair, and sincere, and I am grateful for the opportunity to respond.

The timing of this roundtable allowed for a revisiting of *The Politics and Security of the Gulf*, which had largely lain on the shelf since it was set in type in 2009. Three years later, as I pen this response, Washington's leaders find themselves enmeshed in a fierce budget imbroglio that looks eerily like that of the British in the late 1960s. After the upcoming presidential elections, U.S. political leaders late in 2012 face a so-called "fiscal cliff" that may require over half a trillion dollars in higher taxes and/or reductions in defense and other government programs. With a mature economy exhibiting anemic growth, many Americans today wish to curtail defense spending in order to devote more resources to domestic social programs, just as the Labour Party desired for Britain over four decades ago. To downsize its military budget, London found -- as Washington may also find in the second decade of the twenty-first century -- that a superpower must curtail the breadth of its commitments. This financial belt-tightening underlay Britain's withdrawal from "East of Suez," one of the central subjects of this book, which led to London's cutting-and-running from the Gulf in the 1970s, an abdication that ushered in a period of rising Gulf tension and violence. Today, there exist leaders in Washington who argue for a similar sharp military drawdown from the Middle East. With American newspapers publishing headlines that look remarkably like those in Britain in the late 1960s, it was refreshing to review some of the themes and questions that *The Politics and Security of the Gulf* poses.

I appreciate the positive aspects of the reviewers' comments. As Rice notes, the typical tenor of most historical analysis on London and Washington's defense ties is the oft-cited "special relationship." From the beginning of this study into these two superpowers' involvement in the Gulf after World War II, however, I found that the two states' national interests often diverged, leading to tension between them, a subject that serves as a sub-theme for the book. In fact, an earlier working title was "The Anglo-American Gulf," a double-entendre that suggested not just that these two superpowers have dominated the affairs of the region for decades, which they have, but also that a "gulf" at times separated their policies there. The editors at Routledge, however, thought the title too ambiguous and dropped it, although the emphasis in the text on the differences between the two states' policies in the Gulf has remained.

In this roundtable the readers also comment, generally positively, upon the chronological reach of the book, which stretches from the early 1800s up to the present day. Rice remarks, in fact, that the book's strongest point is its scope. This broad brush allows one to see what brought Britain to the region long before oil became king. The strategic location of the region, lying at the junction of three continents, and athwart the air, sea, and land lines of communication that bind their residents, has for centuries attracted the great powers. Only by looking back a couple of centuries can one understand how and why Great

Britain became deeply involved there: to keep open the transit lanes to India by quelling tribal feuding and suppressing piracy. The earliest manuscript of *The Politics and Security of the Gulf*, however, started chronologically with World War II and ended with Desert Storm, the event that effectively marked the United States' assumption of security duties there. For the foresight and wisdom of commencing the account back in the 1800s and stretching it up to the present, I must pass credit to Routledge editor Joe Whiting, who believed it important to put this story in a proper long-range framework.

The opening and closing chapters, therefore, exist primarily for context. Like the reviewers, however, I wish there existed more room in these short chapters for details. In that vein, I concur with David Winkler that it would have been nice to include in the introductory pages more details concerning early American missionaries' work in the Gulf, for example, or nineteenth-century U.S. naval visits there. But because these didn't further the central theses of the book, I chose not to address them. Likewise, in the final chapter on "American Peace and American War," one could write volumes. But the goal there was to bring the book up to the present in a condensed fashion. As Winkler notes, asking a historian to compile an account of recent events causes him or her to "wince," which was exactly how I greeted this task from Routledge. I didn't like cramming into one small diminutive chapter the years from 1991 to today; many important issues got compressed, and some were left out altogether. In the short section that describes the growing Arab hostility to the lingering post-Desert Storm American presence, for example, the book should have included a discussion of the bombing in Yemen of the USS *Cole*, which I omitted; as one reviewer comments, it was a "glaring" omission, and I concur.

To my mind, a good history book ought to offer lessons for those living in the present, and I tried to proffer some in *The Politics and Security of the Gulf*. Looking toward current strategic doctrine for London and Washington, for example, the book suggests the broad outlines of a successful military policy for the region. Drawing from my interpretation of the British experience, I suggest that the United States project power to the region primarily with its Navy, which as navies allow, permits a nation to influence events without placing large numbers of military personnel ashore. In addition, the book argues for a robust fast reaction land force, which could deploy on short notice to pre-positioned materials and land facilities in friendly coastal Gulf states. This suggestion is not particularly new or revolutionary; it was (without the prepositioning gear) the strategy of the British through most of the 1800s, and as the book recounts, it was the policy that the British adopted shortly after Iraq threatened the newly-independent state of Kuwait in the early 1960s. It is also the same policy that the United States stumbled onto after the chaotic events of the 1970s, apparently without recognizing the similarity to previous British doctrine.

One reviewer questions the efficacy of such a policy, specifically whether what worked for Britain in previous decades will necessarily work for the Americans today. Might not an overly imperial American presence engender a local backlash? This is a reasonable concern. Perhaps the book might have been more explicit in recommending locations for potential U.S. support facilities in the region. Inside the Gulf's two Arab regional powers -- Iraq and Saudi Arabia -- the presence of foreign military might throughout the twentieth

century gave rise to public concerns of loss of sovereignty; over the long term, in the future it would be more advantageous to the United States if Saudi and Iraqi allies did not have to face the hostile scrutiny of critics who charge that the ruling regimes prostrate themselves to the West. But, especially behind closed doors, Arab diplomats from the smaller Gulf emirates through history have welcomed and encouraged the presence of the West and its military might. Surrounded by hostile larger neighbors, these small emirates have good cause to continue to fear the power of those around them. It is in these small Arab emirates, then, that the U.S. should build its support facilities, aiming to keep its presence as small as possible, however, so as to avoid a possible backlash.

Rice notes a tendency to gloss over anti-British sentiments in the region, citing specifically the book's insufficient attention to the insurgency in Yemen in the 1960s. While writing the book I struggled for a considerable amount of time over the proper treatment of the Yemeni conflict and subsequent British pull-out from Aden. I thought then – as today – that the subject was adequately covered in a balanced fashion. To highlight the importance of the subject, I purchased from a commercial source the publication rights for the photo on page 133 of two agitated British soldiers, one pointing his gun at an unarmed Yemeni youth; the petrified young boy, crying, pushes the barrel away. That photo cost several hundred dollars, nearly double that of any other. It was worth it, however, in that it captured the horrific nature of that insurgency, which ultimately led to Great Britain's withdrawal from Aden. One of the great challenges, I suppose, of writing a book with a broad chronological sweep is striking a proper balance among all of the different historical events that comprise it. In this case I thought I had it right, but others would argue, that the anti-British insurgency in Yemen deserved more emphasis. That is an honest difference of opinion that I accept.

Another reviewer astutely notes the paucity in *The Politics and Security of the Gulf* of information gleaned from personal interviews. The shunning of oral interviews was my conscious choice, dictated by a desire not to run afoul of national rules governing research with human subjects. At the time I was writing the book I watched from afar as a colleague's work ground to a standstill when his research, at a different academic institution, came under the hostile scrutiny of that school's Human Research Protection Program. It was a mess, and it led to dozens of hours of administrative work on his part, and a delay of several months in his writing. Rather than face the specter of the same thing happening to me, I made a conscious decision to limit my sources to archival documents, published document collections, and secondary sources.. It was the right decision at the time, although it undoubtedly limited the resources that I could draw upon. Since that time my ongoing research has received the blessing of my home institution's Institutional Review Board. As an aside, I might note that many in the historians' trade have decried the oversight of oral history as an undue burden and a mismatch from the intent of federal statutes concerning research with human subjects; there is a chance that within the next couple of years all oral/written interviews will be exempted from regulatory oversight. For a full discussion, see the Oral History Association's web page:

<http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/oral-history-and-irb-review/>

Finally, in one of his observations, Davis comments on the fact that, despite the inclusion of the term in the book's subtitle, the subject of "Anglo-American hegemony" is not directly addressed as a conscious, ongoing collusion between the two superpowers in the Gulf. He is right: the term is not used in that fashion. As the book argues, the Anglo-American hegemonic presence in the Gulf is a serial one, with the British taking the leading role through 1971. Although arriving in the Gulf in World War II, the Americans were happy to allow, and in fact encouraged, the British in the post-war years to lead in the region for as long as possible. It was only after two decades of political and military chaos in the Gulf in the 1970s and 1980s that the Americans finally assumed, in 1991 after Desert Storm, the hegemonic role that Britain had abdicated two decades before.

I pass along my sincere thanks to the coordinator of these roundtable reviews as well as all of the reviewers. With American leaders currently engaged in a national debate over how large a share of its national treasure the U.S. military should consume, a dialog that resembles that of the British prior to their abandonment of the Gulf, I hope that this discussion will prove fruitful in shedding some light into the West's involvement in this crucial region, along with the potential perils of a precipitate withdrawal from it.

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