

# The U.S. and the Persian Gulf

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Carrollton/Carroll County League of Women Voters  
Tracy P. Stallings Community Center, 118 South White Street  
(Rotary Room)  
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# About this talk

- Part 1:
  - History
  - Today
  - Choices
- Part 2:
  - Q&A & Discussion

# History

- Brief Modern history starts @ discovery of oil:
  - 1920 Western oil companies came to the Gulf
  - France/Britain, ties with Gulf states, Iraq, & Iran
  - 1943 US & SA strengthen ties- Aramco was founded in 1948
  - 1943 British-Soviet occupation of Iran (& US advisors)- Roosevelt, Churchill, & Stalin promised independence & territorial integrity of Iran
  - 1953 CIA overthrows popularly elected Prime Minister Mosaddeq & reinstating the Shah (often mentioned by Iran)
  - 1958 Britain left Iraq (coup overthrew the king with Qassim taking control- Ba'ath party)
  - By 1971, Britain would leave the Gulf, while US had minor presence in the area

# History

- First oil revolution:
  - 1960 OPEC was formed (organized oil producers)
  - 1973 Arab oil embargo, & the Arab-Israeli conflict (oil prices more than quadrupled- up to \$12 pb from \$2 in 1970)
  - Oil producing countries new found power
  - Twin Pillars policy, support allies like Iran & SA & let them police the region and limit the USSR influence
  - As a consequence, the Saudi royal family & the Shah became strategic allies (price of a perceived stability & control in the region)

# History

- Second oil revolution:
  - 1978 strike by oil workers in Iran (in pretext of oppression & deteriorating living standards)
  - 1979 Iranian revolution & the fall of the Shah
  - 1979 the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Ayatollah Khomeini) by a popular revolution
  - 1979-1981 US hostage crisis
  - 1979 Soviets invaded Afghanistan
  - 1989 Mujahedeen supported by US & Saudi Arabia drove the Soviets out of Afghanistan (Bin Laden becomes a recognized leader)
  - Mujahedeen gave birth to the Taliban, Taliban gave Bin Laden a refuge & safe haven to operate his network – & 9/11
  - Oil prices are up to \$36 pb (1981)

# History

- Operation Desert Storm:
  - 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait (oil prices \$40 pb)
  - 1991 US & Allies liberated Kuwait
  - Economic sanctions and disarmament
  - Separate regions, and autonomy
  - Iran and its influence in Iraq (and elsewhere)
- 9/11, Afghanistan & the Iraq War
  - 9/11/2001 – Al Qaeda (Bin Laden)
  - 2001 US & Allies invade Afghanistan
  - 2003 Iraq war, Al-Qaeda, & sectarian violence

# Today

- Iraq
  - American troops remain
  - Sectarian & ethnic violence
  - Sunnis, Shiites, & Kurds
  - Foreign fighters (mainly Sunni Arabs)
  - Fragile government & autonomous regions (violence in recent elections)
  - 2010 & planned withdrawal of US troops
  - US must be ready to deal with changes in the relationship with Iraq (unpredictable future)

# Today

- Iran
  - More isolated & more militant after the last election
  - Moving closer to a military dictatorship
  - Continues to pursue nuclear arms (now becoming a reason to show defiance and determination)
  - Unpredictable regime with hostile intents
  - Influence over Shiites in Iraq, & other groups (Shiites are also in the UAE, SA, etc.)
  - Confronting Iran & stability of the Gulf region and oil markets (oil prices are now around \$77 pb)
  - Israel & possible military attack on Iran
  - US (& UN) limited options to deal with Iran

# Today

- Saudi Arabia
  - Human/Women rights
  - Supporters of Al-Qaeda in SA (money & recruits)
  - Influence over Sunnis in Iraq
  - Exporting Wahhabism & intolerance
  - US continues to court the Saudis as an ally against Iran
  - The price of keeping SA an ally may be very high

# Today

- Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, & UAE
  - Continue to play a moderate & minor role
  - Solid, but silent, allies of US, provide military facilities & cooperation
  - Critical to stability in the Gulf
  - Dubai is trying to remake itself out of the shadows of oil money & old tribal traditions (quiet remarkable & unique in the region)
- Afghanistan, Yemen, & Somalia
  - Although not in the Gulf, influence the Gulf region
  - Taliban & long-term stability of Afghanistan
  - Al-Qaeda & potential recruiting & operational grounds in Yemen
  - My prove to be more critical for the stability of the Gulf region

# Choices

- U.S. military withdrawal by end of 2010 from Iraq
- War in Afghanistan
- U.S. Administration's possible approaches to Iran & consequences
- U.S. approach to Saudi Arabia, & other Gulf allies
- Israeli-Palestinian conflict & its impact on the region
- Other issues of significance?

# Information

- The slides are found here:
  - <http://www.westga.edu/~adel/leagueofwomenvoters/>
- Contact information:
  - <http://www.cs.westga.edu/People/AdelAbunawass>