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## The Persian Gulf States: A General Survey

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Fortunately for Israeli leaders, who had become increasingly alarmed by the rapid Egyptian military buildup in the Sinai, the American initiative failed and they regained their freedom of action.

The policy lesson of 1967 is clear: confusion and illogic in defining and applying concepts of national security can lead to disaster. It did so for Israel in 1973, an assertion Stein convincingly documents in another publication,<sup>1</sup> for that country's last-minute success in battles it had been unready to fight was many times more capable than it might otherwise have been. If Israeli policy-makers were confused in 1967 they were and are a paragon of purpose and consistency in comparison to their recent and present American counterparts. Given the demonstrated consequences of strategic confusion, Washington would be well advised to devote less attention to hardware and more to fathoming the purpose and implications of the commitments in defense of which that hardware might have to be used.

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Cottrell, Alvin J., ed. *The Persian Gulf States: A General Survey*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. 695pp. \$37.50

Alvin J. Cottrell has produced an authoritative survey of the Gulf region. This comprehensive study is a storehouse of background information on the Gulf that selectively will be of interest to students, scholars, and government officials alike. It does not attempt to keep pace with the rapid changes in the area. Most chapters do not cover events since 1978, and some perhaps dwell too

much on earlier times. Nevertheless, it is a significant research tool and a handy reference work for those wishing to learn more about the intricacies of the Gulf context.

The book is divided into four parts of varying length and includes twelve appendixes. The four parts deal with history; economics and urban development; culture: religion, language, and literature; and arts and society. C. Edmund Bosworth contributes an article on the nomenclature of the Gulf, in which he examines the various names given to the Gulf in history, but leaves the contemporary political controversy between Arab and Persian advocates to "a subsequent chapter on the modern political and diplomatic history of the Gulf."

The first part of the book focuses on history and geography, with separate chapters on political geography, military affairs, and international organizations. The excellent chapter by Ralph H. Magnus provides a comprehensive background of the Gulf states' experience in international organizations that is especially useful in placing the emerging Gulf Cooperation Council in proper perspective.

The second part deals with economics and urban development, focusing primarily on oil and urbanization. The research is thorough, but dated by the rapidity of change in the area. It is still interesting and valuable as a historical reference.

Culture is the subject of the third part, with chapters on religion and law, languages, and Arabic and Persian literature. The insights into the Gulf society to be gained from reading these chapters would be greatly advantageous to students.

The final part of the work is entitled "Arts and Society in the Persian Gulf." While it does include art, architecture, and of course, carpetmaking, it also sheds light on vital pieces of the political puzzle. The chapters dealing with social change, the tribes of the Gulf, and

<sup>1</sup>Janice Gross Stein, "Intelligence and Stupidity Reconsidered: Estimation and Decision in Israel, 1973," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, September 1980, pp. 147-177.

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competing ideologies are especially important.

The twelve appendixes prepared by Kimbriel Mitchell and staff add an encyclopedic dimension to the work and by themselves resemble a short reference book. The many statistics presented in the appendixes, apart from the tables, are not footnoted, but selected bibliographies are provided for each appendix.

*The Persian Gulf States: A General Survey* is an important compendium of information on the Gulf that will be of interest to anyone attempting to understand the factors and forces at play in this volatile area.

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Tombs, Robert. *The War Against Paris 1871*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 256pp. \$44.50, paper \$14.95

The suppression of the Paris commune, the final act of the Franco-Prussian war, marked the birth of the revolutionary myth that, to protect their narrow class interests, the French bourgeoisie crushed the democratic proletariat. Class warfare coupled with the traditional rivalry between Paris and the provinces led to open warfare and violent repression in the spring of 1871.

Robert Tombs has examined the war against Paris and indicates that the issues were in fact far more complex than those described by adherents of both the left and right.

Tombs demonstrates that the Versailles Army was not simply a reactionary force composed of remnants of the defeated Imperial Army. Rather, it was a fragile amalgamation of units raised by the Provisional Government of National Defense, volunteers, and returned prisoners of war. Moreover, the commune's forces were no revolutionary vanguard, while the Parisian Army was in fact much weaker than its numbers would indicate. Relatively few

battalions were willing to resist the Versailles regime.

Troops of the national government were not in fact anxious to fight the commune. One reason that Thiers and his generals laid siege to Paris instead of launching an immediate attack was the fear that the soldiers would refuse to do battle with fellow Frenchmen.

The conquest of Paris was relatively inexpensive. The vast majority of the casualties were caused by the repression after the campaign. Tombs explains this by pointing to the facts that a number of reactionary generals sought to destroy Parisian radicalism and the government was willing to permit them almost unlimited freedom of action. The Versailles Army, though not enthusiastic, was a disciplined force willing to follow the lead of its commanders. Vindictiveness of the few, not the willingness of the majority, led to the final massacres.

The results of the repression were at best ironic. Reactionaries were discredited for their mindless brutality. Moderates lost credit for their failure to control their forces, and the left gained a myth that had little to do with reality.

Tombs does not explore the wider ramifications of the Civil War. Was the commune the last gasp of the Jacobin left? Was it the start of the proletarian revolutionary myth? These and other questions remain unanswered. On the other hand the author does provide an excellent study of the problems involved in restoring the authority of the new regime in exceptionally difficult circumstances. Having been defeated in a foreign war and with German armies still on French soil, the unstable new regime had to restore internal order. The price was high, but the result was the ultimate creation of a republic that was to be the most enduring French regime since the end of the Napoleonic wars.

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