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Foreword

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) takes pleasure in presenting this report, a summary of the proceedings of the Fourth IISS Regional Security Summit: The Manama Dialogue, held from 7–9 December 2007. Organised annually since 2004, the IISS Manama Dialogue is intended to provide a forum for the national-security establishments of the participating states to exchange views on regional security challenges. It is a unique forum, in that it is made up of minister-led delegations from over 20 countries, including not just the states of the region and the immediate neighbourhood, but also the outside powers with security interests in the Gulf.

Having established the viability of this nascent informal regional-security institution in the first three years of its existence, the IISS concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2007 that permits and facilitates the holding of the Manama Dialogue for a further five-year cycle through to 2011. The Dialogue held in 2007 was the largest ever and the IISS and the Kingdom of Bahrain are determined to ensure that the Dialogue continues to develop as an ever-more essential element of the regional-security architecture.

The Manama Dialogue provides opportunities for the makers of Gulf security policy to make vitally important public statements about the evolving policy approaches to regional security, affords an opportunity for numerous private bilateral and multilateral meetings between government delegations involving states that otherwise would not have the opportunity so to meet and engages, also, the leading experts in the region in a manner that can help to animate fresh policy thinking. Indeed the IISS is intent that its own research programme should be both informed by the deliberations at the Manama Dialogue and offer opportunities for our subsequent analysis later to be absorbed by regional policymakers.

In publishing this report the IISS hopes to draw attention to the main lines of public debate at the Dialogue. Throughout 2008, the Institute's 50th anniversary year, the IISS will be consulting closely with the participating states in the Manama Dialogue to ensure that the agenda for the next summit, scheduled for 5–7 December 2008, will effectively meet their needs.

The IISS would like to thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for its gracious and generous support to this Manama Dialogue process.

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