

# THE 4TH IISS REGIONAL SECURITY SUMMIT MANAMA DIALOGUE

Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2007



THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES (IISS), LONDON

**The IISS Manama Dialogue is the primary security forum for the Gulf. Convened annually, it brings together all elements of the national security establishments of the countries in the region – Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen – with the key external powers – Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.**

The Manama Dialogue provides a forum where the most senior authorities responsible for defence, foreign policy and security issues from the participating states can exchange views on the security challenges of the region.



HM King Hamad  
Bin Isa Al Khalifa



HRH Prince Muqrin Bin  
Abdulaziz Al Saud, Chief  
of General Intelligence,  
Saudi Arabia

Demand for such an informal mechanism for regional security consultation has been demonstrated by the success of the Manama Dialogue, convened annually since 2004, and the involvement of all relevant actors ensures a dynamic assembly for security diplomacy in the region. Recent developments have reinforced this demand and the Kingdom of Bahrain has, as a result, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IISS that permits and facilitates the holding of the Dialogue in Manama annually through to 2011. The institutionalisation of the IISS Manama Dialogue will be an excellent anchor for regional security diplomacy.

The IISS will host the 4th Manama Dialogue from 7–9 December 2007 in Bahrain.

**The IISS, an independent think tank based in London, with a worldwide membership, is the leading authority on political–military conflict**



Mehmet Gonul, Defence  
Minister, Turkey

### Origins

In organising the Manama Dialogue, the IISS was inspired by the following considerations:

Firstly, the heads of state, and many different ministers, of the six members of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) meet regularly. (The members are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.) However, GCC security consultations, quite understandably, do not involve non-member states. In particular, they do not involve the security establishments of Yemen, which borders a number of GCC states, nor those of the two large countries to the east and north: Iran and Iraq.

Stable relations between these nine countries would form the basis of regional security, hence the formula that the IISS adopted, 'six plus one plus two'. This was the inspiration for our invitations to the relevant regional national security establishments to attend the inaugural 2004 Dialogue.

Secondly, a number of countries from outside the Gulf have key security relationships with regional states, and also have diplomatic and economic roles that intimately affect the shape of regional stability.

In order to ensure that the external powers understand the regional perspective, and that they in turn can explain their own policies to the region, we extend invitations to Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. As the summit has evolved it has been important to involve two other regional countries whose security interests are intertwined with the Gulf: Egypt and Jordan.

Thirdly, security diplomacy is not the preserve of any single ministry: national security advisers, defence, interior and foreign ministers all have a role, as do intelligence chiefs. Limiting invitations to any one agency would prevent a rounded discussion of regional security challenges. Hence our determination to organise this event as a summit meeting of the national security establishments of the participating states.

### Unique Format

The strength and appeal of the Manama Dialogue lies in its unique format. It is designed as four events rolled into one.



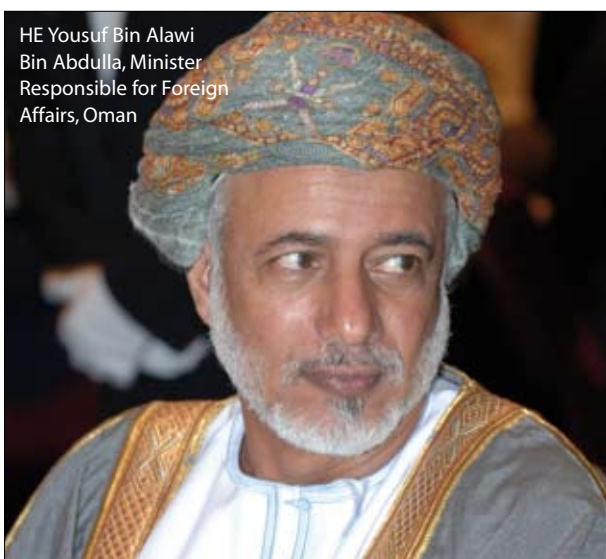
Yuriko Koike, National  
Security Adviser  
(later Defence  
Minister) Japan

Firstly, the plenary sessions offer a public platform for ministers and national security advisers to clarify and expand on government policy before an expert audience that includes parliamentarians, leading opinion formers from all participating countries, former government officials and carefully selected media representatives, thus informing and refining the quality of wider public debate on Gulf security.

Secondly, the break-out groups, attendance at which is restricted to delegation members only, provide an opportunity for officials and experts to analyse pertinent strategic issues more deeply and to advance policy aims in a private and strictly off-the-record environment.

Thirdly, in what is perhaps the most politically useful element of the summit, there is the opportunity for the participating ministers and security officials to gather discreetly and privately for bilateral and multilateral meetings in order to advance immediate policy goals.

Fourthly, the multilateral lunches and dinners help to cultivate the sense of a defence and security community where shared interests can be protected and advanced.



HE Yousuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Oman



Manouchehr Mottaki, Foreign Minister, Iran

### Delegations

The numerous opportunities for security consultations provided by the Manama Dialogue are exemplified by the sheer breadth of the attending delegations, which are drawn from the entire spectrum of national security establishments. Over the first three years of the Dialogue, participating countries have been represented by vice-presidents, deputy prime ministers, defence ministers, foreign ministers, national security advisers, directors of intelligence organisations, as well as chiefs of defence staff and senior military commanders.

The summit, which lasts for three days, has been specifically designed to offer unparalleled opportunities for bilateral and multilateral meetings between delegation leaders. The Manama Dialogue thus offers a unique opportunity for private policy-relevant meetings to advance regional security understanding.

Participating states have acknowledged the value of the Dialogue format by continuing to send high-level delegations: in its first three years, the Manama Dialogue has drawn ministers or cabinet-level officials from the participating countries and several delegations



continue to lead with multiple ministers, all accompanied by senior officials. These ministers have expressed a desire to see the summit established as a key part of the defence and security infrastructure of the Gulf region.

### Themes

Issues to be addressed at the plenary sessions of the 2007 Dialogue include: The US and the Regional Balance of Power; Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia; Energy and Regional Security; Territorial Integrity, Borders and Gulf Security; Iraq and the Neighbourhood; and Regional Framework for Gulf Security. The break-out sessions will address: Shia–Sunni Relations; Regional Armed Forces and Security Policy; Transnational Threats; and Economic Security, Sanctions and Regional Stability.

Delegation leaders attending the 2007 Manama Dialogue will have the opportunity, both in public and in private sessions, to advance policy issues on the key regional security challenges.

### Conclusion

Since its inception, the IISS Manama Dialogue has evolved rapidly into an essential component of the



regional security apparatus, uniquely involving all the states and key personalities responsible for Gulf security. The IISS has no agenda of its own in convening this summit, apart from facilitating meetings of government leaders in circumstances that they could not so easily organise for themselves. Now fully established as the primary vehicle for security diplomacy in the region, it continues to involve government representatives at the highest levels so that regional security strategy can be developed.

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