

The Future of Persian Gulf security

- Agenda:
- Persian Gulf Countries
- Religion and History
- US security
 - Denying oil to potential enemies
- Foreign Policy effects lives: A story
- Thoughts on US policies and missed opportunities





- **Persian Gulf**
- The name has been disputed by many of the neighboring Arab countries since 1960's
- Iran identity at least for the past 2000 years
- Pan Arabism encouraged renaming it to the Arabian Gulf by some of the Arab countries
- The water channel separates the Iran Plateau from the Arab plate important for geologists, historians, archeologists, politicians, merchants and scholars
- Strait of Hormuz: a conflict, control and chokepoint
 - Approx. 17 million barrels per day transit through the Strait of Hormuz in tankers.
 - Over 3.5 billion cubic feet of natural gas, approximately 18 percent of world shipments, travel through the Strait via LNG tankers
- And....the coastline has beautiful beaches, vast fishing areas, coral reefs, rich sea life, pearl oysters.



Religion

Islam: Sunni and Shia

- Sunni and Shia, agree on most of the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam.
- Bitter divide originated when Prophet Mohamed, leader of the Faith died and a dispute arose on who should succeed him.
- Today, about 85 percent of the approximately 1.6 billion Muslims around the world are Sunni, while 15 percent are Shia, [according to an estimate by the Council on Foreign Relations](#).
- While Shia represent the majority of the population in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan, and a plurality in Lebanon, Sunnis are the majority in more than 40 other countries, from Morocco to Indonesia.
- Despite their differences, Sunni and Shia have lived alongside each other in relative peace for most of history.
- In the late 20th century, the schism deepened, exploding into violence in many parts of the Middle East as extreme brands of Sunni and Shia Islam battle for both religious and political supremacy.



History

- Portuguese influence lasted 250 years following their 17th Century dominance of the seas that began with Vasco Da Gama
 - Portuguese battled the Ottoman Empire and local contenders (the various tribes)
- The British and the Dutch followed
- Ottomans left during WWI
- 1763 to 1971 British **controlled** what is now UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar through the British residency program. This promoted flourishing commerce
- WW II Iran was the “Persian” corridor to supply military equipment to Russia and the Persian Gulf was the Maritime pathway for supplies
- Was a battlefield 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq War, each side attacked the other's oil tankers. Disguised flags flew.
- The 1991 Gulf War, the largely air- and land-based conflict followed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.
- 2018 UK opened a permanent base in the Gulf on [HMS Jufair](#) and now has set up a support facility in Oman
- Which brings us to the US involvement, followed by the US Persian Gulf crisis in 2019 with tensions between Iran and her allies and the US and our allies.



US Security

- It is geopolitically and geo-economically strategic subregion.
- A security dilemma is inevitable
- Different states seek absolute power amid an unpredictable and rapidly changing situation.
- Mutual accusations , distrust, ignorance of each others needs has fueled instability.
- Turkey and Israel have entered the security sphere by supporting UAE and Bahrain
- The world's largest single source of petroleum
- 2019, the Persian Gulf nations of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE (OPEC monthly review)
 - Produced about 31% of the world's oil
 - Held nearly 48% of the world's crude oil reserves,
 - And about 35% of the world's natural gas reserves (Source: US Energy information EIA.Gov).
- Sticking points: Yemen Ceasefire, Iran's Nuclear Program, Syria



Denying Control of Oil To Potential Enemies

- Maintaining the U.S. military presence in Persian Gulf costs upward of \$60 billion a year. Because these forces can also be used elsewhere, that sum is not entirely spent on defending the region.
- Why then is the US devoting so much resources, energies, and war planning to the Persian Gulf. Would it not be more sensible to leave the oil issue to market forces and to leave politics out of it?
- For more than half a century a central drive behind the American military strategy in the oil-rich region has been to deny the control of such vast resources to powerful enemies who would thereby become even more powerful and thus more threatening.
- Today, prevailing perception in Washington is that Iraq and Iran are aggressive, dangerous states.
- Deterring their ability to encroach on Saudi oil fields—hence denying these states additional oil revenues—is one aim of the continuing American presence in the region.
- The underlying concern is not just about possible disruptions in oil supplies, and ensuing price shocks.
- The larger issue, for the US, is that **if Iraq or Iran were to enrich themselves by taking control of additional oil reserves, these regimes would soon become more menacing to the US than they already** are, even if they were eager to sell to the rest of the world all the oil they seized.
- The extent to which Iraq and Iran are a threat will remain a matter of debate. Do they pose a threat to the United States? OR is the U.S. concern more for its friends in the region, especially Israel, for whom the two states are potential threats?
(Brookings Institute 3/2002 Persian Gulf Oil Strategy)

US Security In The Persian Gulf..... There Is A Price To Pay

Tales From The Sand

A Reserve Navy MD's Accounts of His Time in the Kuwait AOR

Wednesday | March 30, 2005

Housing

More news from the housing front. As I've noted previously, we each have less than 33 sq ft of personal space in which to live for the Army Regs list as a minimum per person (the minimum is 55 sq ft). Our bay holds something like 104 people, although we only have 78 people in the bay right now. Of course, by US fire code standards, there should not be more than about 50 people in the bay. Oh well, I guess the Army will react after a fire or infectious process takes enough people out. We're trying to convince the housing authority to understand this more news later. So some people have tried to personalize their little space by using

ad-boards/place to
the Army came
there will be some of the
day, ... of ...

Posted by Raja at 22:55 in Housing | Link | Comments (0)
Comments

Tales From The Sand

A Reserve Navy MD's Accounts of His Time in the Kuwait AOR

Monday | December 13, 2004

City Services in the Desert

Electricity and Sewage

Well, electricity is some bizarre combination of locally-generated (via a variety of gas and diesel-powered generators of varying sizes - 1 KW to 100KW) and imported from the Kuwait power stations. It's all 220v 50Hz stuff so you have to be careful what you plug in and where. The buildings/tents are grossly underpowered for the number of people who live there and what they tend to plug in (e.g. laptops, dvd players, etc). People tend to charge laptops and DVD players in the off position and then run them on batteries. I've seriously contemplated putting up a large solar panel and a bank of batteries here at the hospital as backup power to drive personal electronic gear so we aren't compromising our generator's abilities, etc.

There's sewers. More than that, I can't say. I'm not sure if they are septic tanking and then pumping or if they have a hookup to some sort of Kuwaiti sewage system. I'll ask one of my buddies from "Forward Deployed Preventative Medicine Unit - South" that's their bag anyway. I've seen the chemical heads getting pumped out by a large black tank truck with the label "Hose Truck". They also pump out the shower trailers and the Con-Ex/Iso container heads. I'm just not sure how the buildings do it.

Posted by Raja at 11:49 in Infrastructure | Link | Comments (0)
Comments

the Kuwait AOR

Friday | December 10, 2004

My work

A brief overview of my work environment.

Let's see, we have 2 locations here in my camp. Of course there are quite a few other camps in the Kuwait AOR. They tend to have smaller clinics with fewer staff and less capability in terms of services.

My location has a brick and mortar clinic building with quite a few exam rooms and an ER. I work there a few days a week doing "sick call" and backing up the daytime ER person. They also have mental health, dental, OB/GYN, Optometry, physical therapy and nutrition.

We also have the EMP. Expeditionary Medical Facility. This is essentially a tent hospital with male/female wards, rehab ward, ICU and 2 full-blown OR's. The OR's are actually in CONEX or ISO containers (they look like what you see cargo ships carrying.) We've also got a CT scanner and digital radiography. I go to daily morning report with the department heads and the post-call and on-call docs. I'm on call-there on a regular rotation. We can do ABG's and basic chemistry's and CBC's and UA's and some basic culture work as well. FUN! Medicine in a tent! We're medicine, surgery, ortho, etc. A Level III hospital in a set of tents!

The EMP also has an ER. It's what runs after midnight when the TMC (Troop Medical Clinic-Army speak, I think soon to be BHC, Branch Health Clinic-Navy speak).

This is all very cool.

Posted by Raja at 13:55 in [Operational Medicine](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments](#) | [Comments](#)

Great writing Raj. Any restrictions on use of this blog? I am new to this form of communication. Should some info be sent via direct email?

See much trauma from action or accident?

How is sewage handled?

How is electricity generated?

the Kuwait AOR

Thursday | June 02, 2005

Dust Storms and Fire Alarms

Turns out a dust storm will move enough particulate matter into the air to set off the fire/smoke alarms and make us evacuate our billeting (housing, racks, prison-space, whatever) in the middle of the night. And then it'll happen again in the night until the Fire Marshall can just turn off the alarm and post a watch for fires/smoke.

So, besides the physical details as noted above, it was a dark and stormy night.

No, really, it was dark and stormy.

If you've ever seen the fog roll in through the Golden Gate, you'll know what I mean when I describe cloudlike waves of what appears to be mist blowing past the sodium vapor streetlights in waves. As each wave blows past the streetlight, the lead front is highlighted and then the density pattern passes on, ephemerally, and is reconstituted again by the next wave. You can almost see a wave-like nature rather than the actual flow of particles past the isolated pool of light. In San Francisco, these waves are cool, wet, and whitish colored.

The other night, the waves were dry, hot (>100 degrees F), reddish-brown, solid particles that pelted the skin and were associated with heat lightning and strikes of lightning from the sky. Very dramatic. When we went to bed at 1030p, it was in the 80's. When the alarm went off at 1a, it had actually gotten hotter. Neat effect of the dust storm.

When the alarm went off the second time, many of us figured out to take a towel or scarf to wrap around our faces to make breathing easier and to reduce the pain of the pelting of the sand. Visibility was down to 200 meters.

So the dust storm was very similar to the rolling fog, except exactly the opposite. You can see how the poetry doesn't differentiate it, but the "facts" do.

I don't know, is this a conflict between western thought and my own

<http://desertmedicine.blog.com/217445/#cmts>

6/2/2005

Tales From The Sand

A Reserve Navy MD's Accounts of His Time in the Kuwait AOR

Monday | September 05, 2005

Medical Cases

Not too much has been happening here, just the usual cases and movies and miscellaneous preparations to go home. (When? I don't know, but soon.)

27 yr old SGT with Crohn's Disease. No abdominal abscess, but he does have colitis and ileitis. He's got to go to Germany for further evaluation. I'd send him to the US but his command wants him back in Iraq. I don't think that's a good idea, and I told them that. I'm not sure they agree with me.

58 yr old Puerto Rican SFC. Several days of chest pain. Got a little better with Mylanta. Decided to go salsa dancing. Got bad chest pain. Came to us. Has had a NQMMI with peak CK 900 and peak MB 55. Says he wants to go dancing some more. He's better now. Well, I disagree; a heart attack means you go to Germany and get an angiogram. And recovery. So there.

59 yr old Phillipino employee of AAFES. Chest pain for a year. He thought that the nitro would make it go away. Turns out he's not had a heart attack, but he's about to. He gets transferred downtown since I can't send him to Germany (he's non-US and non-military).

27 yr old male who injured his foot (dropped a weight on it) 4 weeks ago. Got mobilized from the US and started wearing these spectacular boots we get. The injury got rubbed raw. He developed a combination of athlete's foot and bacterial skin infection. He's getting antibiotics in the hospital now.

How about my 48 yr old patient with probable sleep apnea? He's falling asleep at his desk and sometimes on guard duty. He's getting an Article 15 (we sailors call it Non Judicial Punishment or Captain's Mast). Maybe someday he'll get evaluation and treatment.

19 yr old with acute abdomen. He's had abdominal pain for 7 days. Every bump in the road caused him pain. In fact, yesterday, he had pain while he was unloading his Super-HET. So, after 7 days, he drove his HET up to the hospital and came in. He actually left the engine running. He thought he could just drop in and get some quick pain

Tales From The Sand

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Wednesday | July 20, 2005

Medical Happenings

Some short data on today's medical events.

First patient I saw when I came on shift was a guy who was found down at another camp. He was promptly intubated and shipped to us. Unfortunately he is a [REDACTED] and not eligible for care. So we had to transfer him to a downtown hospital. I got to work on him a bit. At the same time, a 30 yr old TCN was accidentally electrocuted and went into cardiac arrest at another camp. The Hospital Corpsman there had to shock him 9 times to bring him back. They promptly shipped him to us. I worked on him a little and the ER docs did all the heavy lifting. We transferred him downtown also. Too bad we don't take care of the TCN's also, but they have to draw the line somewhere. Interesting cases. This was the first time since I think this hospital was established in 2004 that we've had 2 patients in the ER intubated at the same time. Our respiratory therapist did a great job!

Posted by Raja at 03:59 in [Operational Medicine](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Write a comment

Name: _____

Home: _____

Email: _____

Posted by Raja at 1:11 PM
Saturday | June 11, 2005

It's Hot

Have I mentioned that it's hot? 110 deg F by 0900. Highs between 115
Did I mention that I work in a tent that has air
conditioning that can only drop the temperature a few degrees when
it's this hot?!

Posted by Raja at 10:41 in [Weather](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

The end of an era.

Tales From The Sand

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Sunday | March 13, 2005

Killer Attack Rodent?

A story about a couple young marines. I love the Marines and respect them, but these two were funny enough to chuckle at. Plus they were embarrassed. So our more recent waves of arrivals were over in the warehouse building (where there is coincidentally more room than in the barracks building). There were a couple newly-arrived Marines (they had just come down from Tikrit, serious combat experience) Anyway, the warehouse is known to have fleas, miscellaneous rodents, and spiders. These two combat-hardened guys are in their respective bunks. It's about 2 am and they came barreling out of their bunks, complete with yell. Turns out a mouse or a rat managed to run past both of them and they noticed and transiently freaked. There's something about a guy in cammies with an M16 getting concerned about a rodent...of course it could have been a killer, attack, desert, ROUS...

Posted by Raja at 16:15 in [Housing](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)
Comments

if the warehouse has a rodent problem at night time you can check trails with black light the urine also fluoresces also good way to find light colored scorpions. Time for good door seals. Miht want to pass this on to the PMT's if you have any.

Tales From The Sand

A Reserve Navy MD's Accounts of His Time in the Kuwait AOR

Tuesday | January 18, 2005

Saturday Call

Another saturday, i'm posting late because of the internet challenges we've had here.

Let's see, it's been a couple of days....I admitted a couple patients. Syncope, pretty interesting, she may have an encephalopathy. We had to get her out of theater. Then there was the gastroenteritis. She was fun. At first, we couldn't tell what her belly pain was all about so we ordered an abdominal x-ray. She went on back to the iso-container that had our x-ray machine (all diagnostic machines were in the iso-container). We couldn't puke out in the CasRec where we have canvas, easily-washable floors, oh no! She had to puke on my iso-container!"

That was a fun night. Almost 1 hour of sleep that night.

Posted by Raja at 02:21 in [Operational Medicine](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)
Comments

Tales From The Sand

A Reserve Navy MD's Accounts of His Time in the Kuwait AOR

Wednesday | January 05, 2005

Mutant Egg Girl

Invasion of the mutant eggs! Navy doctor eats mutant eggs and becomes a psychiatrist!

So I'm eating breakfast this morning with Dr. A (name not indicated for operational security reasons). She always has a couple hard boiled eggs as part of her breakfast. She peels one, breaks it in half to get rid of the yolk. It's got 2 yolks, partway separated, but 2 distinct yolks! Cool, she's been eating hard boiled eggs here at a rate of 2 per day for 6 months. This has never happened before! Wow!

So she moves on to egg number 2. Peels. Breaks in half. 2 YOLKS! This time, they're completely separated! I bet if she opened up 1 more egg, it would have a chicken inside it!

She (wisely) elected not to eat any of the 4 yolks. If she had, she would have developed super chicken-powers. Hmmm....such as....the inability to fly. A predilection towards flapping one's arms pointlessly. A tendency to cluck to oneself. The ability to molt. Look out! I'll molt on you! All I need is some tar to finish you off with!

Turns out she was a psychiatrist before this anyway.

Posted by Raja at 13:04 in [Chow](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)
Comments

I heard that the military got a two for one deal on the organic eggs! maybe you will get some fresh chicken soon and not the frozen foster farms :)

written by: mome at 2005/01/07 - 05:23

Tales From The Sand

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Movie Reviews

Friday | August 12, 2005

Scary Movie 3

So, we're watching the Movie Channel on the hospital TV. It's Movie 3 but there are Arabic subtitles. Of course, the audio track was in Arabic as well. It took us a while to figure out the language. So we're sitting there commenting on it and then WHAM! The screen goes blue and puts up a screen that says "Please Standby." So, I bet someone figured out the audio track is in Arabic. And then WHAM! The screen goes back to the movie, this time in English! For some reason, we thought that was hilarious.

Anyway, it's a funny movie. Watch it sometime without your kids....It's rated R.

Posted by Raja at 00:49 in [Movie Reviews](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Thursday | August 04, 2005

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2003)

1 million have served over 20 yrs 5k have died Casualties are 10%
It does not include non battle disabilities.

Tales From The Sand :: Military Medicine Page 1 of 3

Tales From The Sand

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Saturday | June 11, 2005

Military Medicine

Recruiting for all of the military is falling. Retention is an issue. Expansion of the military is another cause. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8143733> has a nice article.

A lot of the people I talk to here (medical and otherwise) say that they are getting out after we get home. You can't blame them. Those of you who have talked to me or emailed me directly understand some of the more sensitive issues. Since this is a public forum, I will not criticize anyone here, but, suffice it to say, this war is taking its toll on many of us and on many Americans.

Anyway, the MSNBC article is a good one, focuses on the Army, but does mention the Navy.

I joined the Navy. It's sort of surprising that I'm essentially working for a mix of KBR and the Army in a desert with no access to ships or water.....8-)

Posted by Raja at 10:31 in Operational Medicine | [Link](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Comments

all I can say no family newsletters from the command, active duty fleet hospital are only assigned for 179 days in theatre, but reserves go longer. doesnt make sense. some poeple including me have business and attend school, and juggle a family life makes this deployment very hard on all of us. Its Ok to serve but when your significant other is gone for a long period of time with no official word of when they come home is a moral buster. Never mind financial constraints when your income is cut in half it is a serious matter.

Doc,
My baby brother Jim arrived in country about Jan 25 or 26 with E Dallas. I was trolling Google for Camp Arifjan and I stumbled across your blog. I thought it might be a good way to say Hi to him. I understand your security concerns so I am not using any last names but his is the same as on my email address. Bro is a blood specialist / technician. If you happen to run into him, please say "Hi Gypsy" he will know we are thinking about him.

Also great blog. I am going to send a bookmark to all our family, they can get a feel for what is like there.

Thanks
Pete

Written by: Pete at 2005/02/10 - 16:29

[Write a comment](#)





A Father Missing His Best Friend





Thoughts On US Policies and Missed Opportunities

- Reassess US policy
- Evaluate US and Saudi Arabia relations: Arms economy? Saudis bet on the Trump Family downside?
- US strikes Syria target Iran backed Militia
- Does the Middle East use oil as a weapon?
- War for oil? What is it about? Was it about international need that we are supporting? Is it about securing oil supplies?
- We provide security...you provide oil!
- Do combat troops provide stability in the region? Or Are economic sanctions better than war
- Did our strategy help Russia and China get a foothold. Is it our job to get rid of these guys? China has a lot of influence but zero troops
- Israel, Emirates and Bahrain working together.
- Should this result in the death of Americans? Diplomacy vs troops: Like China. Have we taken sides?
- China is exerting power without war
- China, Russia and US exerting their imperial powers...how can we all agree that its not a zero sum game.
- Israel, Emirates and Bahrain working together.
- Alliances come and go...Iran / Iraq/ Saudis/ Emirates.
- If we leave it to Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iran...the Axis...they will not be in peace, so will we invade them to instill our will.....our way....will they listen to us or will they go their way.
- What about the migrant workers and human rights? E.g. Qatar with population of less than 3 million dependent on 2 million migrant workers working at 120F temperatures (FIFA Prep 2021)
- Last but not least. war has decimated and destroyed Mesopotamia's ancient archeological legacy

Discussion Questions

- How can US interests be realized in the Gulf?
- Is it realistic for the US to reduce its footprint and let other countries step in?
- What do you believe is the best policy for the US bases in the region?
- What is the significance of the new normalization agreement between Israel and UAE/Bahrain
- What are your thoughts on the cancellation of the Iran Nuclear deal and imposition of sanction
- Lumped as Islamic countries, do the specific denominations play a part?