

FOREWORD

“Environmental Security Planning, Prevention, and Disaster Response in the Arabian Gulf Region” was a United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) initiative, with assistance from the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment (DUSD (I&E)), the National Defense University’s Near East-South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA), and the Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL) of the United States Army War College. Hosted by the Qatar Armed Forces at the Ritz-Carlton, Doha, Qatar, the conference brought together senior military leaders from the Arabian Gulf Region, international academics, governmental and military subject matter experts, and non-governmental organizations to examine critical environmental issues that affect the security of the region.

Environmental Security cooperation in the Arabian Gulf is important to U.S. strategy in the region. It complements USCENTCOM’s Cooperative Defense Initiative (CDI) activities and offers a valuable venue for regional security cooperation. This event was the second Environmental Security conference focused on the Arabian Gulf. The first, entitled “The Role of the Armed Forces in Environmental Security,” was conducted at Muscat, Oman, on April 16 and 17, 2000, and discussed a range of environmental issues that have implications for operational planning, weapons acquisitions, and military basing exercises and training in the region.

This year’s conference focused on designing a framework for a regional approach to environmental disaster prevention and response and for putting in place a long-term, sustainable process for achieving a regional capability. The Arabian Gulf region has common threats from oil spills, shipping incidents, threats from weapons of mass destruction, water shortages, and petrochemical infrastructure complexes. Natural disasters are common and are not governed by international borders. Successful solutions to resolve these issues must be multilateral and regional in nature, and must involve the host nation, national and regional economic and military authorities, non-governmental and international organizations, and the international donor community.

The conference made a valuable contribution to the security cooperation and development missions of the United States Central Command. It demonstrated the broad scope of Environmental Security issues and showed their unique value as tools to encourage cooperation within this strategically important region. Enhancing the role of the military in environmental stewardship and disaster response planning offers opportunities for the combatant commanders to interact with their regional partners and to promote regional security and stability.

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