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**A Family Affair:
Civil-Military Relations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
(Draft)¹**

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The Role of the Military in the Politics and Economies of the Middle East

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Introduction

The relations of the military of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the civil sector are determined by three functions: the military protects the Royal Family (the Al Sa`ud); it plays a role in the balance of power between member of the Royal Family; and it is an important factor in the relationship with the Kingdom's foreign protector, the United States. This paper will discuss the military in relation to these aspects over time, from the founding of the modern Kingdom in 1932 until the present.²

Civilians (meaning the Al Sa`ud) have always been in control of the military. They decide who rules, not the military, as in some other Middle Eastern countries. The development of the military in modern Saudi Arabia reflects the concerns of the family to protect itself. Indeed, the Saudi state, for many years, was much more a family-state than a nation-state.³ Unlike in several other Middle Eastern countries, where the military was established by a colonial power, in Saudi Arabia the military developed as a tool of the Al Sa`ud as they made their bid to rule Arabia. It developed as part and parcel of the Saudi state-building process.

The priority given to protecting the Royal Family accounts for the cardinal division of the Saudi military into two main bodies: the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) on the one hand, and the other branches of the military, notably the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) and the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) on the other (the "regular army"). SANG has as its primary goals protecting the family, guarding against insurgency (along with other civilian, police and intelligence units under the Ministry of the Interior), and the protection of oil installations. It is designed as a mobile force, and there is a constant effort, under contract to an American company, the Vinnell Corporation, to modernize its equipment and improve structure and training.

The regular army is charged with defending the borders of the Kingdom. External threats always existed, whether from the Hashemites in Iraq and Transjordan, from Yemen, from Iran, and later again from Iraq. Over the years its equipment has gotten better and the quality of manpower and training has improved, but its weaknesses have been demonstrated over time by the need to rely on advisors and soldiers from Britain, Jordan, Pakistan and the US. This was not just for the technical and

manpower advantage. Saudi leaders feared that too strong an army would constitute fertile grounds for a coup (these fears were vindicated several times -- see below). Since the 1970's, the Saudi have had no choice -- despite the billions of dollars they have poured into modernizing their armed forces -- but to depend entirely on "over the horizon" help from Washington in the case of a serious threat. It is a fact that Saudi forces were entirely incapable of defending the Kingdom following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq's Saddam Husayn in August 1990. There was no choice but to call in the US.

The existence of two strong armed forces has also played a role in intra-family politics. Today, the Crown Prince, `Abdallah bin `Abd al-`Aziz, is the Commander of the SANG, and it his power base. The Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA), which controls all the regular armed forces, is controlled by Prince Sultan bin `Abd al-`Aziz, and serves as his power base. This balances the two main branches competing for the leadership of the Al Sa`ud.

With the discovery of oil in 1938, the security of Saudi Arabia became of primary interest to the United States, and Americans became intimately involved in the kingdom. But it was not simply the defense of an oil-laden landmass that interested Washington; it was the defense of a family, the Al Sa`ud. For both the Al Sa`ud and its patron the US, the defense of the family was intimately tied up with the defense of the state and its resources. The development of the armed forces, defense spending, the nature of procurement and deployment revolve around this driving necessity. The US, urged on by the influence of its powerful oil companies, became intimately involved not only in the protection of the kingdom's borders, but in the protection of the Royal Family. A covenant was drawn up, and it was very much personal: It was between the Al Saud and a small circle of US leaders, CIA agents, and men from the oil industry.

Protecting the Princes First and Foremost: The Military as Praetorian Guard

Saudi Arabia is – first and foremost – *Saudi*. It is one of only two countries where a family name is incorporated into the official name of the state.⁴ If the military has any role in the politics of the country, it is – first and foremost – to protect the dynasty, the Al Sa`ud.

The modern Saudi state began life as a tribal⁵ chieftaincy. According to Kostiner, Arabian chieftaincies were a polity of

loose tribal alliances based on power sharing, mutual responsibilities, and duty-sharing relationships among nomadic tribal groups, sedentarized inhabitants centered in villages and towns, and a ruler who governed these alliances. The ruler was usually a member of a leading family or tribe who had both the authority and obligation to maintain internal order in the chieftaincy, to protect his people (*himaya*), and to wage wars against enemies. Sometimes he had religious authority as well.⁶

In the chieftaincy, nomads received the benefits of markets and religious services. In return they fought for the ruler, and sometimes even paid tribute to him, although at other times the ruler was the distributor of munificence. The same, more or less, went for the sedentarized populations. Authority was often of a decentralized nature.⁷

The distinction between a chieftaincy and an organized state was clear. There was no clear demarcation of borders since borders were fluid and related to the grazing zones (*diras*) of the tribes. There were no elaborate bureaucratic structures, and integration of social groups was quite limited, based on temporary partnerships rather than nationalism or civic solidarity. The social groups, including tribes, were supposed to show loyalty to the ruler, but he had to provide for their needs in return; if he did not, they might leave. In the Saudi case, the Wahhabi call, or *da`wa*, provided a needed reason for loyalty to the founder of the modern Saudi Kingdom, `Abd al-`Aziz bin `Abd al Rahman Al Sa`ud (known widely as Ibn Saud) as the *Imam* of the Wahhabi Islamic movement, but it was no substitute for providing the economic and social needs of the tribes.⁸

The development of the modern Saudi state occurred within the extant Arabian political ambit of chieftaincies, which were led by families who tried to control tribes and their ambiguous borders. It competed with and eventually defeated the Rashidi state of Ha'il, the Idrisi state of `Asir, and the Hashemite state of the Hijaz. From the beginning, Ibn Sa`ud sought to assure the survival and prosperity of his family, the Al Sa`ud. Following military defeat of the *Ikhwan* rebels, this was accomplished socially by creating alliances via marriage and the distribution of wealth and other resources.

Ibn Saud, through a combination of force, effective Wahhabi propaganda, and strategically marrying into key families, managed by 1932 to create a tribally based polity, with the beginning of a more state-like entity. His main military forces had been sedentarized tribally identifying Najdis, and they were aided by a recently sedentarized strike force, known as the *Ikhwan* (brotherhood). While elements of the *Ikhwan* revolted in the late 1920's and were finally defeated in 1930, it was only natural that Ibn Saud would continue to draw on loyal tribes for the defense of the family. Loyalty was the key, and this was best obtained, reasoned Ibn Saud, by using men at arms that answered the call of tribal *shaykhs* who were loyal to him.

After 1932, Ibn Sa`ud was faced with the many challenges faced by all new states: finance, protection, and stability. The tribal polity had to change and become more like a modern state, but tribal values and ways of running things would remain important and still do.

The establishment of the Kingdom found Ibn Saud in control of a vast stretch of land that had only recently been united. Most income in Arabia had derived from the pilgrimage, but that was barely enough to support the province of the Hijaz, and certainly not the entire Saudi state. Moreover, the pilgrimage and Saudi finances in general has been devastated by the worldwide depression. Assessments of Ibn Saud's ability to hold areas as different as the Hijaz, Najd, and al-Hasa together in one country were quite low, and indeed, in the early years of the Kingdom Ibn Saud's main concern was internal security.⁹

For many years, with the British in control of his Hashemite enemies in Iraq and Transjordan, Ibn Saud saw little need for a strong regular army, and although he did

develop an army (as Yizraeli assesses, “[h]is intent was that the various armed forces would balance each other, thus preventing the regime from becoming dependent on any single military force”¹⁰), protecting the new state’s borders were not his responsibility. Instead, Ibn Saud concentrated on building up the first two ring of defense of the family, the Royal Guard (*al-Haras al-Maliki*) and SANG (see Figure 1). For domestic security he relied almost entirely on the former, backup up by the latter, which was tasked with keeping order amongst outlying tribes.

Although the Royal Guard first receives a line item only in the Saudi budget of 1952-1953,¹¹ it is clear that it existed from the 1930’s. Drawn from loyal Najdis from oases and smaller communities, it numbered about 1,000 men, and formed the closest inner circle for defending the Al Sa`ud. Ibn Saud also kept several slaves for his own security, and his closest personal protection was the task of his most loyal slave, who watched him when he prayed in the mosque and stood behind him during *majlis* meetings.¹² The Royal Guard was incorporated into the regular army in the 1960’s.¹³

The SANG has its origins in those units of the *Ikhwan* who remained loyal to Ibn Saud during the rebellion. For many years these irregular paramilitary forces were known as the White Army, after their white robes (*thawb*). Sometime in the 1930’s they were organized into the Office of *Jihad* and *Mujahidin* and were known as the Brigades of *Mujahidin*. They were under the authority of the Royal Council and headed by Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz al-Shubali.¹⁴

In May 1955, King Sa`ud bin `Abd al-`Aziz issued a decree forming the SANG which incorporated six *Mujahidin* brigades. The reason for this appears to have been a regular army coup attempt earlier that year and unrest amongst the Shi`i population in the Eastern Province. In July the next year its structure was laid out in a royal decree, in which it was announced that the SANG would be based on Islamic teaching, and, essentially, tribal values and traditions. According to Dahy, A Saudi who worked with SANG, the aim was draw on the *mujahid* tradition of the SANG’s *Ikhwan* forefathers. Its first commander was `Abdallah al-Faysal Al Farhan, a scion of one of the main cadet branches of the Al Sa`ud, descended from one the brothers of the first Saudi Imam, Muhammad bin Sa`ud. In June 1957, King Sa`ud’s son Khalid was made Commander, and he was replaced by his brother Sa`d in 1963. When King

Faysal took over from King Sa`ud in 1964, the present Crown Prince, `Abdallah bin `Abd al-`Aziz, was given command of SANG. It is from `Abdallah's tenure that the development of SANG really begins.¹⁵

Although shaken at times over the years by dissent, primarily Islamic,¹⁶ the Al Sa`ud have built up a stable regime based on the co-optation of elites and the distribution of oil wealth (although it must be said that a drop in oil revenues since the mid-1980s and a burgeoning population and unemployment have heavily burdened this system). The SANG has played a major role in supporting the regime, and not only as a fighting force.

According to Dahy, whose doctoral dissertation reflects the Saudi view of the SANG's function, the basis mission of the organization

is the defense of the religion, the King [read the Al Sa`ud], and the homeland.... This mission was to be achieved within a cultural framework based on Islamic principles, the internal and external policies of the Kingdom, and the cultural inheritance of ... Saudi Arabian society. Consequently, the National Guard adopts a holistic approach to its personnel, seeking to raise their educational and cultural standards, ... aiming to care for them, to maintain their dignity, and to protect their spiritual and material balance.¹⁷

The Al Sa`ud do indeed adopt a holistic approach to the SANG, using it to inculcate values that support the family, such as loyalty and Islam. Like a family leading a chieftaincy of old distributing its wealth to the loyal tribes as a means of showing his generosity, the SANG serves as a mechanism for distributing the Kingdom's wealth to those with a strong tribal heritage.

There is a massive network of schools and hospitals to support members of the SANG.¹⁸ According to Anthony Cordesman, "US experts estimate that the SANG now supports up to a million Saudis by providing income, medical support, and education." Cordesman further stresses that recent economic problems in the Kingdom mean that often a SANG soldier is the "sole breadwinner in an extended family."¹⁹

The development of SANG, as the protector of the Al Sa`ud, was based on the instilling of loyalty to the Royal Family as true Islamic leaders, and therefore amalgamating the religious-tribal with the national. The July 1956 decree stated:

It is required by all personnel to take care of his religious duties and to take special care in performing his daily praying on time at mosques. All who fail to carry out these duties without any legitimate reason or who are involved in any act that is considered to be in violation of Islamic teaching were to be severely punished.²⁰

The Islamic legitimacy of the regime is reinforced by SANG via trained preachers (*mutawa`a*) who are in the ranks. They are usually elderly NCOs, and they engage the soldiers in conversation about religious matters.²¹

The Al Sa`ud have endeavored to have its SANG soldiers defend the family based on the equation: Al Sa`ud = Islam = Saudi Arabia. The Al Sa`ud used the SANG to continually hold high tribal values such as loyalty to the *shaykh*, and did this through the distribution of wealth and services. The SANG also became the vehicle for preserving these values and honoring them. The magazine of the SANG, *al-Haras al-Watani* is replete with material emphasizing these themes. Most importantly, the annual national folklore festival, the *Janadiriyya*, is sponsored by `Abdallah and the SANG. During the festival, *turath badawi* (bedouin heritage) is glorified. Poets recite traditional poetry, folkloric items are displayed and the national television broadcasts the King and senior princes performing the traditional Najdi sword dance, the *`arda*.²² The SANG thus functions as vivifier and glorifier of the tribal heritage; since the Royal Family sponsors the festival via the SANG, and the SANG itself has a tribal heritage, an intrinsic connection is made between history Islam, tribal values and the Al Sa`ud.²³

Since `Abdallah took over the SANG in 1964, the role of the SANG has become more complex. While still maintaining its primary function of protecting the regime, it has also developed into a more modern fighting force, although not nearly to the extent that the regular army has. The procurement pattern is one of a formation designed to move quickly to all parts of the extensive realm in Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs), but it lacks tanks and air defenses that would make it useful in defending against an

invasion from outside the country. Beyond protecting the Al Sa`ud in general, the SANG is designed to protect `Abdallah in particular (see below).

While estimates of the full-time strength of the SANG vary greatly, Cordesman quotes a senior US official who puts the strength of the SANG at 105,000 in early 2001, a figure that would put it close to that of the regular army. In order to reach these numbers, `Abdallah has had to go beyond recruiting solely from Najd and has expanded recruiting to Hasa and other regions as well. The economic situation has increased demand to serve in SANG, to the point where not all qualified applicants can be absorbed.²⁴

SANG currently (2002) has four mechanized brigades equipped with LAVs, and five light infantry brigades equipped with V-150s. The regular forces of the SANG are supplemented by tribal forces known as the Fowj. With these forces, the remnants of the chieftaincy are apparent. Numbers are not exact, but they are reported to number 25,000. They are not very well trained, but their leaders are chosen for their loyalty to the regime, and they are deployed in areas that meant to contain any attempts by the army to carry out a coup.²⁵ The Fowj in particular, but the SANG in general, serve as a way for the princes of the Royal Family to maintain contacts with the traditional tribal groups and distribute favors. According to Cordesman, the Fowj are deployed in order to limit “the ability of the army to conduct a coup.”²⁶

In his discussion of the limitations of the full-time SANG forces, Cordesman notes that they have steadily improved in quality, particularly in training and mobility. All the same, he continues, SANG is severely limited in that it does not have the heavy armor and air defense that could allow it to take on an invading force from Iran or Iraq.²⁷ The fact is that the SANG is not designed for that, and neither is the army. For defeating a foreign enemy the Al Sa`ud have relied and will continue to rely on the United States.

Preventing coups and politics within the Al Sa`ud is the reason for the near lack of coordination between the SANG and the regular armed forces under the Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA), although Cordesman notes that there is “one token liaison meeting a month.” Moreover, there are no joint war plans, no joint exercises,

and SANG and the regular army use two entirely different communications systems. If cooperation were needed, it would require each service to send an officer with a radio to the other service.²⁸

Cordesman believes that there is no military justification for this compartmentalization and ensuing lack of interoperability.²⁹ Perhaps from the point of view of a neutral, outside observer, he is surely correct. But it seems that this structural lacuna is deliberate and will continue to remain so. Crown Prince `Abdallah is not about to give up his fiefdom to the Minister of Defense and Aviation, his half-brother Sultan, and internal threats to the regime remain real. The SANG is a trusted force, and keeping it compartmentalized keeps it from cooperating with the regular forces in a move against the Al Sa`ud. Having two separate forces may be redundant and frightfully expensive, but the regime must be preserved at all costs.

Like any new state, the Al Sa`ud developed their regular armed forces as well. But the priority of preserving the family against internal threats made for a very slow development of these forces. After all, regular armed forces demanded larger numbers of people, and the larger the pool, the more difficult it would be to assure loyalty. The family was concerned about external threats, but they never were more important than protecting the family, and from the 1950's they could rely on the concern the US had for the oil fields to make the US responsible for external defense.

Reflecting his distrust of the regular army, and his lack of funds, Ibn Saud developed it very slowly. In 1930, an "Administration for the Army" was set up, with departments for artillery, machine guns, and infantry. In 1934, it became the Agency for military Affairs. It was not until 1946, at the urgency of the British, that the ministry of defense was established.³⁰

MODA was originally formed to take full charge of security. But after the first coup attempt in 1955, King Sa`ud separated out the SANG in order that the regular army and the SANG balance each other. He later confided to the US ambassador that he "rejected proposals to unite the various defense forces for fear of a conspiracy."³¹

For the Al Sa`ud, the regular army has often seemed like a necessary evil, and it was rightly viewed with suspicion, since it was the venue for several coup attempts. In May 1955, a plot was uncovered amongst army officers near the Hijazi town of Ta`if. Apparently influenced by Egyptian officers who had been invited by King Sa`ud in 1953 to replace American advisers, this group of approximately one-hundred officers reportedly planned to establish military rule along Egyptian lines. According to a US report, Prince Mish`al, the Minister of Defense and Aviation, approached the accused at their trial, exclaiming, "Which one of you thinks he is Gamal Abdul Nasser?" The ring leader, Lt. Col. Ghanim Mudaya al Ghamidi, was, as his name indicated, from the Ghamid area south-east of Ta`if, and in June King Sa`ud made a point of traveling there to visit and distribute gifts. While the Nasserist aspect of this coup attempt seems prominent, Yizraeli downplays it and believes that the attempt had more to do with a reduction in pay and resentment at the development of the SANG.³²

The 1955 attempted coup was only one of many signs of disloyalty in the regular armed forces. In October 1962, four Saudi air transport crews flying supplies to the Yemeni royalists defected to Egypt. The entire air force was grounded, and the Saudis asked the US to patrol Saudi airspace. The next month, another group of Saudi air force pilots, this time all members of the Royal Family, were discovered planning a coup, but they managed to escape to Egypt. The air force was grounded again, and batteries were removed from tanks.³³

In June and July 1969 a major plot was uncovered, involving several hundred officers, including about one hunder from the air force. More than twenty were senior officers, including a few generals. More related arrests took place the next year. Again, the air force was grounded, and when flying resumed, it was without munitions. Implicated officials included sixty air force officers, the director of the air force academy at Dhahran director of military operations, the director of the office of the Chief of Staff, the commander of military garrison in al-Hasa, a former army Chief of Staff, the former commander of Mecca garrison, the director general of maintenance corps, the director of officers' affairs of the Internal Security Academy, officials of Petromin, the director of Public Administration Institute, a junior officer from the Sudayri family, and other officials. Their plan was reportedly to bomb the

Royal Palace from the air, killing the King and senior princes, and proclaim a Republic of the Arabian Peninsula.³⁴

Air force personnel were involved in a reported coup attempt at Tabuk in 1977. For a time, according to Kechichian, air force flight time was limited to thirty minutes, unarmed. In order to head off any other plots, the regime doubled the salaries of all armed services personnel and civil servants.³⁵

Islamic unrest since the Gulf War seems to have made some inroads into the armed forces, if the reports are to be believed. In 1994 a regular army NCO managed to fire two shots at King Fahd in Riyadh before he was felled by a SANG general.³⁶ In April 1996, it was announced that Lt. Gen. Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Buhayri, also a former deputy chief of staff, had been dismissed from his post. No explanation was given for the dismissal. It may have, however, been connected to the arrest at about the same time of several junior air force officers who were, it was claimed, part of an Islamic fundamentalist group. It was not clear what their exact plans were. In September later that year, the Chief of the General Staff was replaced as well.³⁷

The army is ensconced in huge military cities at Khamis Mushayt, Tabuk, and Hafir al-Batn, and another concentration in the Riyadh-Kharj-Dhahran area. SANG guards oil facilities, and protect regime in Jeddah, Ha'il, Hofuf, Riyadh.³⁸ This type of deployment demonstrates that the army is meant to be kept away from most of the power centers and SANG to protect the Royal Family itself.

There is a question surrounding the equipping of the SANG with respect to its ability to prevent a military coup. The regular armed forces have tanks and planes that could easily defeat the SANG, which cannot confront heavy armor and has little air defense. This limits its ability to protect the Al Sa`ud. It may be that the Royal Family now assesses the probability of a coup to be low, or that `Abdallah's half-brothers simply want to keep SANG on a short string in order to limit his ability to move against him. This situation may change when `Abdallah becomes King.

The coup attempts seem to vindicate the Al Sa`ud's suspicions of the army, and may account for the fact that the SANG remains equal in manpower, facilities, and the

quality of their equipment. But intra-family rivalry also plays a big part in the balance between the various armed forces.

Each Prince for Himself: The Use of the Military in Intra-Family Rivalries

The internal politics of the Al Sa`ud are to a large extent *terra incognita*. Family discussions are secret, and assessments are often best evaluated by the maxim: “Those who speak, don’t know, and those who know, don’t speak.” Nevertheless, one can still speak generally about factions in the Royal Family.

During his long reign, Ibn Sa`ud was the undisputed leader, enjoying across-the-family support and legitimacy. Part of his efforts at consolidating his far-flung realm involved strategic marriages with women from the families of important enemies, as well as allies. Today’s Crown Prince `Abdallah, for instance, is the son of a Shammari wife from the Rashidi dynasty of Ha`il defeated by Ibn Saud. Marriage over time to seventeen wives yielded thirty-seven male offspring, and today their offspring also need to be reckoned with.³⁹ Such a large number of offspring led to the Al Sa`ud forming into various factions, each after their own interest, but most loathe to do anything that would endanger the position of the entire family. Full brothers and sons, could be trusted, but half-brothers and their offspring merited suspicion. This led to competition over resources, particularly after oil became important in 1938, and the armed forces were a major resource and center of power.

Ibn Saud made the shrewd move of appointing his son Sa`ud as Crown Prince, but added that Faysal would be succeed Sa`ud as King; Sa`ud was the oldest living son and Faysal the next oldest. He thus struck a balance between his two oldest sons. Sa`ud’s mother was from a less prominent family but Faysal’s mother was from the Al al-Shaykh, the family who’s leader, Muhammad bin `Abd al-Wahhab, made the initial religious-political alliance with the Al Sa`ud in the eighteenth century. The two

sons, however, were rivals, and the military played an important part in this rivalry, with other sons of Ibn Sa`ud taking sides.

In 1944, Ibn Sa`ud had established MODA in the first attempt to establish a functional distinction between the defense of the family and the defense of the kingdom. Under King Sa`ud from 1953 to 1958 (when he was forced to give the premiership to Faysal), there was an express desire by the King to make the army stronger, both in conversations with US representatives and in annual speeches. At the time, the army was not considered a significant base for opposition to him.⁴⁰

August 1956 saw the Royal Guard put under the command of Sa`ud's son Musa'id. The Royal Guard was at the time still under Mish'al bin `Abd al-`Aziz at Defense. Sa`ud confided to Lt. Co. Woodward of the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) that the move was necessary in order to remove the Royal Guard from the close control of Mish'al. Musa'id asked Woodward the following day to supply American officers to train the Royal Guard. Sa`ud wanted to weaken his half-brother Mish'al, who in early December 1956 was dismissed from his post as Minister of Defense anyway. Later that month, Sa`ud's son Fahd took over at Defense. In a conversation with US Ambassador George Wadsworth, Sa`ud explained that the armed forces would now get his personal attention.⁴¹

But the development of a new bureaucracy, with the aura of defending the family (which itself had a martial tradition), and a budget of its own, made control of the regular army a coveted prize among princes, as it was assumed that it would grant them greater power within the Al Sa`ud. The notion still existed that the army could be a tool to defend the family-state, not the nation-state. The army thus fell victim to power politics, and its development was slowed. A 1957 US assessment stated that the Royal Guard, made up at the time of 2700 loyal Najdis, was the best equipped and trained, and could defeat the National Guard and most of the army. According to Yizraeli, it would appear that for the entire period of Sa`ud's reign, this remained the case.⁴²

The Royal Guard itself also fell victim to family infighting. It was headed by Sultan bin `Abd al-`Aziz (today Minister of MODA) until 1947, and then run by the two full

Talal bin `Abd al-`Aziz (1950-1953) and Nawwaf bin `Abd al-`Aziz (1953-1956). Talal and Mish`al competed for control of civilian aircraft and for the Kingdom's nascent merchant fleet. Talal also did his best to remove the Royal Guard from the control of Mish`al at Defense.⁴³

SANG suffered a similar fate. Mish`al did not want rival forces competing with the army, and diverted resources from SANG. As part of his desire to weaken Mish`al, Sa`ud announced the formation of the modern SANG in May 1955. Its structure was established in July the next year, and in July of 1957, Sa`ud put his son Khalid at the head of SANG.⁴⁴

Sa`ud's changes in SANG and the Royal Guard, and the removal of Mish`al at Defense represented a return to the thinking that had prevailed before the establishment of the Ministry of Defense. At the time, Ibn Sa`ud had thought to consolidate security functions. But this rationalization had now been sacrifice on the altar of intra-Al Sa`ud politics. While Sa`ud told US Ambassador Donald Heath in 1958 that he did not wish to unite the defense forces for fear of a conspiracy against the Al Sa`ud,⁴⁵ it was also clear that differentiating the security forces served his supporters in the Royal Family.

Crown Prince Faysal and his half-brother Mish`al rejected King Sa`ud's concept of multiplying the various forces. Although Faysal expressed his doubts over the tribal character of the SANG, both the Crown Prince and Mish`al were motivated by self-interest. Faysal thought that Sa`ud was developing multiple forces in order to shore up his position within the family, while Mish`al wanted to use a strengthened army to reinforce his own position within the family.⁴⁶

From 1958, and during other periods when he had the power, Faysal undercut funding for the armed forces, which were controlled by Sa`ud's sons. But in 1962, when he had consolidated his position, he removed the sons of Sa`ud from the heads of the army, the Royal Guard and SANG, and began again to raise the SANG and army budgets. According to Yisraeli, the increased funding to SANG was meant to placate the tribes who had been upset by King Saud's final dismissal in 1964.⁴⁷

In 1962 Faysal sent the Royal Guard to the Yemeni front to keep it out of Riyadh, and in 1964 put it again under the Ministry of Defense. This amounted to the disbanding of the Royal Guard, since it was not prepared for such duty. It was now no longer responsible for the family's security. While the move may have been partly as revenge for the Royal Guard's support of Sa`ud (see below), Yizraeli stresses that Faysal was sincere in his desire for a rationalization of the military, and, under such a scheme, there could be no room for such similar bodies as the Royal Guard and SANG; he therefore disbanded the Royal Guard and kept SANG. But now that he was power, his position was different than it had been in the mid-1950's when he had opposed the strengthening of SANG. Sa`ud was out, and SANG now served Faysal. From this time on, the army was to be concerned with external defense, and SANG would protect the Al Sa`ud.⁴⁸

The Royal Guard and SANG also played roles in the final showdown between King Sa`ud and Crown Prince Faysal. When Sa`ud returned to the Kingdom in September 1963, he demanded to represent the Kingdom at the upcoming January 1964 summit called by Nasser. Faysal refused, and threats of violence ensued. Fahd bin `Abd al-`Aziz (today, the King) was reported to have demanded that Sa`ud abdicate and threatened to kill him if he refused. Saud then deployed the Royal Guard to protect his palace and threatened Faysal.⁴⁹ In March 1964, Sa`ud made a move to get his powers back, and some of his sons distributed leaflets in Riyadh in his favor. When the *`ulama* decided that Faysal should continue to have full powers but that Sa`ud should remain King, Sa`ud rejected that judgment and again deployed his personal guard and the Royal Guard around his palace. This time, Faysal commanded SANG to surround the palace and ordered the Royal Guard to withdraw, but the Royal Guard refused. A group of officers loyal to Faysal then arrested the commander of the Royal Guard, Sa`ud's son Sultan. In November, Sa`ud finally abdicated.⁵⁰

After the 1969 coup, the Royal Family entered a serious debate about the armed forces. `Abdallah led a conservative faction which maintained that there was no need for further modernization, and that the SANG could perform the needed tasks. Opposing them were King Faysal, along with the two full brothers Sultan and Fahd, who argued that the coup notwithstanding, there was no justification for a total halt to modernization. The withdrawal of Britain from the Persian Gulf in 1971, followed by

the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, which powered military expansion throughout the region, finally settled the argument, and modernization of the Saudi armed forces has continued apace ever since.⁵¹

The all-encompassing nature of the SANG was also a function of `Abdallah's desire to fortify his position. Since he could not spend all the funds allocated on weapons, he built up the hospitals, housing, camps, training, and a communications system separate from that of the armed forces.⁵²

Sensitivities and jealousies surrounding areas of responsibility headed by different members of the family are evident even at the lower echelons. SANG Col. Bandar Al Harbi, attending the US Army War College in 1991, submitted a paper on SANG. After describing the activities of SANG in the health, education, and Islamic areas, he attached an addendum which stressed that although SANG provides medical treatment, there is a Health Ministry as well; and even though SANG publishes Islamic literature, there is a Justice Ministry that publishes such literature. Finally, he adds, there are ministries that have the overall responsibility for many of the programs carried out by SANG. Obviously, someone at the Saudi Embassy had read his paper, and was making sure that `Abdallah's SANG could not claim credit for the work of ministries headed by other members of the family.⁵³

Ever since assuming control of SANG, `Abdallah and Fahd have had their disagreements regarding defense policy. When Fahd became King in June 1982 upon the death of King Khalid, he tried to take SANG away from `Abdallah, but the new Crown Prince stood his ground. Both Fahd and Defense Minister Sultan have tried to undercut SANG, proposing at times to merge SANG with the regular forces or reduce it to a police force by taking away its heavy weapons. Sultan has often advocated national conscription into the regular forces, which would enlarge them to his benefit, while depriving `Abdallah's SANG of tribal enlistees. `Abdallah has successfully withstood these efforts, and since taking effective power in the mid-1990's he has moved to strengthen SANG.⁵⁴

The lack of a joint communication network between the regular armed forces and the SANG means that Sultan and `Abdallah can move their forces about without

informing the other. This may prevent coordination in case of a coup against the Al Sa`ud, but it also allows Sultan and `Abdallah to move against each other without warning.⁵⁵

All four main security-related bodies are under different princes, preventing the concentration of power in the hand one prince. They are also under totally separate chains of command that have different communications system. Sultan bin `Abd al-`Aziz, has headed the MODA, and thus the regular forces, since 1962; `Abdallah has headed SANG since 1963; Na`if, a full brother of Sultan, has headed the paramilitary and internal security forces since 1975; and Nawwaf bin `Abd al-`Aziz, who is close to Crown Prince `Abdallah, is the Director General of Intelligence since September 2001.⁵⁶

Other royals are spread throughout the armed forces, and talented sons are kept close at hand. Most recently, Khalid bin Sultan has returned to activity by becoming Assistant Minister of Defense under his father. Na`if son Muhammad is Assistant Minister of the Interior for Security Affairs. There are many other such appointments.⁵⁷

The SANG remains the main power base of Crown Prince `Abdallah. Sultan continues to run the MODA with a high hand. Modernization of the SANG and the regular armed forces have created two formidable armies. Since 1995, King Fahd has ceased to function as King due to poor health, and `Abdallah has taken over most executive responsibilities, although he still consults with the other powerful Princes. The lack of full brothers and relatively few sons has put him at a disadvantage, but he has compensated, as best as he can, by placing four sons in the SANG or in his personal orbit. His son, Lt. Gen. Mit`ab, is Assistant to the Commander (*Musa`id al-Ra`is*) for SANG's primary operational branch, Military Affairs, and responsible for connections to the tribes. Another son, Khalid, once was director of administration and deputy commander of the Western Province in SANG, and son `Abd al-`Aziz, did some service in SANG before taking a job as an adviser in his father's court. Still another son, Turki, is a SANG officer.⁵⁸

A son of founder Ibn Sa`ud, Badr, is Deputy Commander-in-Chief (*Na'ib Ra'is*) of SANG. Badr was one of the "Free Princes" led by Talal bin `Abd al-`Aziz who sought a constitutional monarchy in the early 1960's, but was rehabilitated by Faysal and assumed his position in 1968.⁵⁹ Badr is not a full brother to `Abdallah, and, although he is not of the same Sudayri mother as other powerful Princes led by Fahd, Na`if, Sultan and others (known as the "Sudayri Seven), his mother is still a Sudayri. Thus Badr is a potential ally to `Abdallah, although he may be suspect. Since the founding of SANG, Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz bin `Abd al-Muhsin Al Tuwayjri has served in the organization and since 1975 as Assistant Deputy Commander. Tuwayjri is loyal to `Abdallah, and comes from a prominent Najdi family.⁶⁰

Although Sultan is building up a good force, the path of development chosen seems often to be serving his goals within the Royal Family. Major arms purchases are often made without dealing with the manpower and maintenance issues involved. He seems to like showy arms purchases, and this may play a role in shoring up his support within the army ("toys for the boys"). Budget constraints have led at times to under funding, particularly after 1995, of manpower quality, maintenance, training, and exercises. When there was money from oil, Sultan used it for purchases, not manpower and training. When there was little money, he did not curb purchases and put it towards manpower and training. There is hope amongst Royal Family members that `Abdallah, when he becomes King, will reduce expensive purchases; this, however, may lead to conflicts with Sultan.⁶¹

A major question remains with respect to the disposition of SANG when `Abdallah assumes the throne upon Fahd's death. Although Sultan runs the MODA, the King is the head of all military forces in the kingdom. When `Abdallah becomes King, it will put both SANG and the regular armed forces under his control. There is a possibility that at this stage the other princes, particularly the "Sudayri Seven," might demand that he give up SANG. Moreover, that `Abdallah will succeed Fahd is beyond dispute, but the issue of who will be `Abdallah's crown prince is far from settled. Sultan is the logical choice, but there are other candidates that `Abdallah might prefer, such as some of the Al Faysal or his own sons. On the other hand, he might come under intense pressure to appoint Sultan, a move that would continue the practice of

balancing factions, by alternating the succession. Whom he chooses will also, no doubt, have an effect on military-civil relations in the Kingdom.

Can't Go It Alone: The United States as Defender and Contributor to the Privy Purse

Given limits on manpower, due both to a small, unskilled population and the fear of conscription, and the concomitant fear that a strong army could carry out a coup, the Al Sa`ud have found it convenient to rely on American – and, to some extent, British – forces to protect the Kingdom from outside aggression. As the situation stands today, the Saudis have built what amounts to a replica of many US defense installations, with US equipment and men trained by the US. In August 1990, when Iraq's Saddam Husayn invaded Kuwait, American troops were able to arrive, lock, load, and be ready for battle.

The US interest in Saudi Arabia, of course, comes from the country's massive oil reserves. Keeping these away from the Soviets, as well as the British, was a pillar of post-WWII US policy in the region. A meeting between President Roosevelt and the British Ambassador to Washington, Lord Halifax in February 1944 illustrated the US claim quite graphically:

Roosevelt received him [Lord Halifax] that very evening at the White House. Their discussion focused on the Middle East. Trying to allay Halifax's apprehension and irritation, Roosevelt showed the ambassador a rough sketch he had made of the Middle East. Persian oil, he told the ambassador, is yours. We share the oil of Iraq and Kuwait. As for Saudi Arabian oil, it is ours.⁶²

Roosevelt's meeting with Ibn Sa`ud aboard the *USS Quincy* on Egypt's Great Bitter Lake in February 1945 was a turning point in US-Saudi and was the culmination of the many efforts of the US oil companies since the 1933 granting of an oil concession to Standard Oil of California (SOCAL). Personal relations were important, and would continue to be throughout US-Saudi relations. The defense relationship between the two countries would serve the political and economic elite of both. According to

David Long, a State Department official with considerable Saudi experience: “For years, the American embassy in Saudi Arabia kept a list of oral commitments to the security of Saudi Arabia made by every US president from Roosevelt on.”⁶³

Although SOCAL struck oil in 1938 and was able to provide Ibn Saud with \$3.2m., the outbreak of World War II led to a drop in oil development, and pilgrimage traffic nearly came to a halt. SOCAL, now renamed the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC), was able to persuade the US government to provide funds through the Lend-Lease Act in the 1940's. After the war, funds from oil provided the minimum to keep the loyalty of the tribes and therefore the regime intact, although mismanagement and overspending kept a deficit going for many years to come.⁶⁴

A secret agreement in 1943 enabled the establishment of a US airbase at Dhahran in the Eastern Province, close to the oil fields, and contacts were established with Major-General Ralph Royce of the US Middle East Command. With Aramco lobbying, in 1951 an agreement was signed to renew the airbase lease, and in exchange the US would supply military equipment and provide an outline for training of a regular army. Notably, however, the emphasis was on training and not on arms, in order to keep the regular army at a certain disadvantage. In 1951 the US established its permanent training presence, the US Military Training Mission (USMTM) for Saudi Arabia.⁶⁵ The US announced its commitment to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Saudi Arabia and stipulated that any threat to it would be of immediate concern to the US. The commitment was embodied in a letter from President Truman to Ibn Saud on October 30, 1950. When Eisenhower was elected, Faysal was sent to Washington in January 1953 to obtain a reaffirmation of the commitment. This commitment has been reaffirmed by successive administrations.⁶⁶

Before the agreement was signed, the involvement of Aramco was much deeper than that of the US government, and even deeper than most people imagined. Not only did it pay the annual United Nations membership fees of Saudi Arabia until 1947, it transported Saudi troops to the front in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, where a small battalion was put under the command of Egyptian troops.⁶⁷

The development of SANG was kept separate from the USMTM when the agreement to modernize the SANG was signed with the US in 1973. This was in keeping with the rivalries in the family.⁶⁸

A US-brokered cease-fire in the War of Attrition between Egypt and Israel made it easier for Faysal to increase defense relations with the US.⁶⁹ The idea was quickly becoming current in Washington and Riyadh that the key to protecting the Al Sa`ud and oil was a concept of increased modernization combined with a US willingness to remain “over the horizon” in order to come to the rescue should the need arise. For both sides, military modernization would serve to link the two countries even more, and make them mutually dependent. The Saudis would receive a more modernized army, but would not have to develop it to the extent where it might become fertile ground for a coup. If real trouble arose, the US could take care of it. For the US, with US equipment, systems, and advisers in place, defending the Al Sa`ud – and therefore oil interests – would be all that much easier. In 1970 Faysal asked the US for an assessment of defense needs and to develop a program to modernize forces. In 1971 he asked for the same with respect to SANG. In 1972 he signed an agreement on a logistical system for the armed forces, and in 1973 signed another agreement to arm and train SANG.⁷⁰

Following the use of the oil weapon in 1973-1974, the Saudis could afford to upgrade their military relationship with the US, in essence recycling billions of petrodollars. Traveling to Washington in June, 1974 Crown Prince Fahd signed several agreements on military and economic cooperation that were said to constitute a “special relationship,” and which Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called “a milestone in US relations with Saudi Arabia.”⁷¹

Together with Iran, the two countries would form the “twin pillars” of protecting US interests in the Persian Gulf, and US companies would profit nicely as a result. The 1991 Gulf War occasioned more military purchases from the US, and military cooperation was tightened.

The Saudis value personal relationships in international relations as well as business. Profits accrue accordingly to both sides. Several US Ambassadors to Riyadh have

often been a close personal friend of the US President. Some, upon leaving their post, some have gone into business with the Saudis.⁷² Another case of a personal relationship is that of former CIA employee Ray Close. Close's maternal uncle was William Eddy, who was a CIA agent working undercover for Aramco in the 1940s, and was the interpreter for Roosevelt's meeting with Ibn Saud.⁷³ Close himself was CIA station chief in Riyadh from 1970-1977, and later formed a consulting company with the Saudis as his client.⁷⁴

A full examination of the business relations between the Saudi and American elite is beyond the scope of this paper. One of these relations, however, is a very good example. It concerns the Vinnell Corporation. Vinnell was awarded the first contract to modernize SANG in 1975. Overseen by the US Army Material Command, who runs the Office of the Program Manager/Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM/SANG), Vinnell has continued to receive the contracts for modernizing SANG. Significantly, the Army Material Command Senior Board of Awards chose another company, based on "technical standing and final cost proposal," and submitted the offer to `Abdallah. But `Abdallah would have none of it:

The Prince indicated that [the company first chosen] was not acceptable to the SANG. Prince Abdullah directed that the Vinnell Corporation of Alhambra, California, be the sole source for the Training Contract for the National Guard.⁷⁵

It is not known for sure why `Abdallah insisted on Vinnell, but the company's connections to the political and economic elite of the US probably had something to do with it. Some of the most powerful US businessmen and politicians are connected to Vinnell and the Al Sa`ud as well, and the connections go through several companies. It is best to start at the top, with the Carlyle Group.

The Carlyle Group is a Washington-based investment bank that was, until quite recently, headed by Frank Carlucci, a former Secretary of Defense under the first President George Bush, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs under President Reagan, and Deputy Director of the CIA. Associated with the Carlyle Group are also Bush Sr.'s former Secretary of State James Baker, and Richard Darman, his Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.⁷⁶ Bush Sr. himself is a senior adviser to Carlyle and has met with top Saudi officials on Carlyle's

behalf. The current President Bush also has a Carlyle connection: In 1990 Carlyle appointed him to the board of an airline food business, Caterair, a position from which he resigned to become governor of Texas.⁷⁷

Carlucci was a Vinnell director, and was chairman of BDM International, a Washington-area defense contractor that bought Vinnell in 1992. Carlyle held 28 percent of the stock of BDM, which controlled one hundred percent of Vinnell.⁷⁸ In 1998 Carlyle sold its interest in BDM, including Vinnell, to TRW International.⁷⁹

Carlyle's Partner II fund is the majority owner of United Defense, maker of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, which is used by SANG and the regular army. This is part of a joint venture with the Saudi government.⁸⁰

In 1999, the US Air Force Europe selected Vinnell, through a joint venture with Brown & Root Services of Texas – Vinnell-Brown & Root – to manage its \$118m. Turkey Base Maintenance Contract. Brown & Root Inc. is a unit of the oil industry's Halliburton Company, which was chaired, until he became Vice-President, by Richard Cheney.⁸¹

The political economy of the defense relationship between the American political elite rolls over into contributions to favorite charities. In January 1994, the Saudi government gave a \$20m. donation to the University of Arkansas for the establishment of the King Fahd Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Former President Bill Clinton had been a classmate at Georgetown University of prince Turki Al Faysal, later head of Saudi intelligence. As Governor of Arkansas, Clinton had worked hard to secure the donation.⁸² Prince Walid bin Talal bin `Abd al-`Aziz has invested with Carlyle and they have advised him. In December 2002, Walid donated \$500,000 to the George Bush Sr. scholarship fund at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Bandar bin Sultan, son of the Saudi Minister of Defense, has contributed more than one million dollars to the George Bush Sr. Presidential Library.⁸³

Although it is likely that several Al Sa`ud members have profited from the connection to Vinnell, one member may have profited more directly than some others. Prince

Khalid bin Fahd, the son of the King, owns the large al-Bilad conglomerate. Al-Bilad created Al-Bilad Vinnell, which has done work for the SANG.⁸⁴

Corruption has certainly also played a part in the political economy of the relations between the Al Sa`ud and the United States. While Cordesman states that reports of corruption and waste have been exaggerated, the sheer amount of money spent means that even a little bit of corruption and wasted means major amounts of money lost. He notes that the equipment bought is good and necessary, but that the offset programs are problematic. (The Carlyle Group has also served as a paid adviser to the Saudi government on the offset program.⁸⁵) Many programs involves some kickbacks, commissions, fees, and even open bribes. Deals are made with firms run or favored by members of the Royal Family. Since there is no way to staff these programs only with Saudis, it leads to the establishment of dummy programs, giving money to retired officers or the friends of princes and senior officers.⁸⁶ Cordesman estimates that SANG receives 93 cents worth of equipment for every dollar spent, while the regular forces only receives 70 cents worth.⁸⁷

Sultan has earned the sobriquet “Mr. Five Percent” for the commission he is believed to have taken on various purchases. In charge of aviation, he is believed to have profited from the purchase of airliners as well. He is also said to represent, through various agents, the French military export company Sofresa.⁸⁸ Much of the Kingdom’s Navy purchases have come from France. Sultan’s son Khalid and his family own National Aviation Services. With his father as Minister of Defense and Aviation, there seems to be no doubt that Khalid profits from this connection.⁸⁹ While stories of corruption abound, particularly around Sultan, `Abdallah is generally believed not be corrupt.⁹⁰

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Finer, in his examination of the intervention of the military in politics, discusses varying degrees of influence.⁹¹ It appears in Saudi Arabia that such influence is indirect, and minor at that. The armed forces of the Kingdom are an extension of the Al Sa`ud, with members of the Royal Family spread throughout. They developed along with the Saudi state, and were not inserted by a colonial power. They are at the

disposal of the Al Sa`ud. Early attempts to influence policy by coups were nipped in the bud, and do not present a threat to the regime. Moreover, it is the Al Sa`ud that uses the military to enrich itself through commissions and kickbacks to themselves and their associates, some of whom may be in the military themselves.

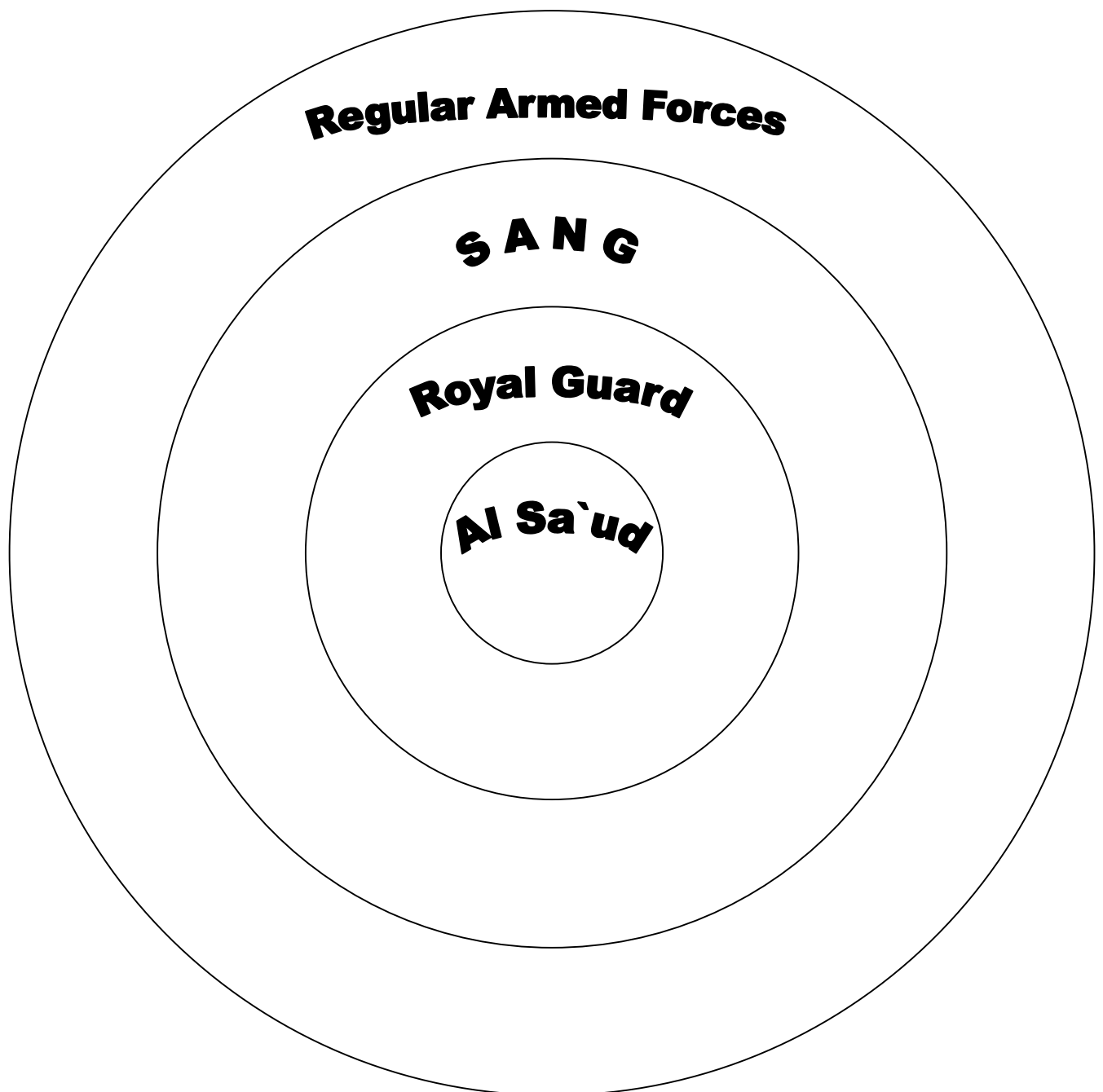
Unlike in non-monarchies, the connection between the Al Sa`ud and the military is an extremely personal one, backed up by historical tribal, family, and business connections. Tribal, ascriptive notions still greatly influence the armed forces. Performance is not the main key for advancement – it is personal loyalty and conservatism. Senior commanders are from families with long, historical ties to the Al Sa`ud. Positions are exploited for profit, and senior, incompetent people often block younger, more competent ones.⁹² Cordesman suggests that there may be seeds of unrest here, if younger, competent people are blocked.⁹³

There is a cultural reluctance to promotions based on merit. Saudis interviewed by Cordesman note that “Saudis do not fail Saudis.” Saudi society includes many foreign nationals, including in the armed forces. Saudis are not selected out because there is a cultural unwillingness to insist on competence at the expense of social relations. Saudis do not fail Saudis, or sons, or nephews, said a Saudi general. A further Saudization of the armed forces, suggests Cordesman, on the face of it a desirable development, seems headed for major problems.⁹⁴

Until recently, the strong connection, politically and economically, between the US elite and the Al Sa`ud has served to protect the Royal Family. But the involvement of Saudis in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the reluctance of the Al Sa`ud to assume responsibility for Saudis funding and being active in al-Qa`ida has greatly undermined support for them among the US population, and this may even influence the support they have in the US leadership. Already, neo-conservatives in the US are calling for a reassessment of the relationship, and some even call for a dismembering of the Saudi state and seizing the oil fields. The Saudis have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on public relations in the US, to no avail. Statements such as those by Minister of Interior Na`if, that blame 9/11 on “Zionists,” severely undermine the Saudi position in the US. In light of their own radical Islamic fundamentalist problem, the Saudis may themselves be reassessing their relationship with the US.

The outcome of the US campaign against Iraq will have an influence on this mutual reassessment. In the meantime, the Al Sa`ud should prepare for the time when the US may no longer be “over the horizon” to protect the Royal Family.

Figure 1: Concentric Rings -- Protecting the Al Sa`ud



Notes

¹ I am indebted to discussions with my colleague Meir Litvak for his constructive comments on many of the ideas in this paper, and to Sandra Welfeld for her research advice. Any research on the military in Saudi Arabia is beholden to the work of Anthony Cordesman. Cordesman's research referenced here is available in draft form on the website of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (www.csis.org).

² Treating these themes separately is necessary for the analysis, although it is recognized that they are intrinsically linked and sometimes overlap. Protecting and benefiting the Al Sa`ud run as the connecting thread through all three themes.

³ Sarah Yizraeli, *The Remaking of Saudi Arabia* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1997) p. 149.

⁴ The other country is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

⁵ By tribal, I mean a certain form of social organization where the tribal group, as a kinship group, forms a central part of identity. I do not mean necessarily nomadic, as there are both settled tribal groups (*hadar*) and nomadic ones (*badu*).

⁶ Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia, 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (New York: Oxford, 1993), p. 3.

⁷ Kostiner, p. 4.

⁸ Kostiner, p. 4.

⁹ Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard, 1985), pp. 58-59.

¹⁰ Yisraeli, p. 150.

¹¹ Safran, pp. 70-71.

¹² Yizraeli, p. 150; Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 90. There is little information on the structure of the Royal Guard. We do have, however, information on its role in intra-family conflicts, and that will be discussed in section two.

¹³ J.E. Petersen, *Historical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993), pp. 100-101.

¹⁴ Talal Dahy, "The Military Organization as Agent for Modernization in Third World Countries: Case Study—National Guard in Saudi Arabia," unpublished PhD dissertation, Florida State University, 1988, pp. 89-91.

¹⁵ Dahy, 91-92.

¹⁶ See Joshua Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou: Saudi Arabia's Islamic Opposition* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001).

¹⁷ Dahy, p. 93.

¹⁸ Dahy, pp. 98-120

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- ¹⁹ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ²⁰ Dahy, p. 105.
- ²¹ Interview with official of the US Office of the Program Manager/SANG, Washington, DC, June 10, 1997.
- ²² Al-Rasheed, pp. 195-196.
- ²³ According to Al-Rasheed, however, Saudis are skeptical of this display (Al-Rasheed, p. 196).
- ²⁴ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ²⁵ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ²⁶ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ²⁷ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ²⁸ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ²⁹ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ³⁰ Mordechai Abir, "Saudi Security and Military Endeavor," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 33 (Fall 1984), pp. 79-94.
- ³¹ Yizraeli, p. 156.
- ³² Yisraeli, p. 156; Joseph Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 102; US State Department, 786A.52/7-2655, Embassy, Jeddah, to State, July 26, 1955, "Further Information on Anti-Subversive Measures by Saudi Government."
- ³³ Kechichian, p. 103.
- ³⁴ Kechichian, p. 104; Mordechai Abir, *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society and the Gulf Crises* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 55-58; Safran, p. 129.
- ³⁵ Kechichian, pp. 104-105.
- ³⁶ US military source.
- ³⁷ Saudi Press Agency, April 9, 1996, quoted in FBIS, Daily Report, April 10, 1996; James Bruce, "Chief Dismissed in Reshuffle," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 9, 1996.

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- ³⁸ Safran, 208-209.
- ³⁹ Yizraeli, pp. 200-201.
- ⁴⁰ Yizraeli, pp. 151-152.
- ⁴¹ Yizraeli, pp. 56-57.
- ⁴² Yizraeli, p. 152.
- ⁴³ Yisraeli, p. 153.
- ⁴⁴ Yizraeli, p. 154.
- ⁴⁵ Yizraeli, pp. 155-156.
- ⁴⁶ Yisraeli, p. 156.
- ⁴⁷ Yizraeli, p. 157.
- ⁴⁸ Yizraeli, p. 157.
- ⁴⁹ There is, admittedly, some confusion here. Yizraeli writes that the Royal Guard was at the Yemeni front at the time. In any case, the *ulama* appeared to have intervened and decided that Sa`ud should attend the summit.
- ⁵⁰ Safran, pp. 100-103.
- ⁵¹ Kechichian, p. 104.
- ⁵² Abir, "Saudi Security."
- ⁵³ Bandar Al Harbi, "Saudi Arabia National Guard (SANG)," US Army War College Military Studies Program" Paper, March 27, 1991.
- ⁵⁴ Kechichian, p. 60. Abir, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 98; Douglas Graham, *Saudi Arabia Unveiled* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1991), p. 19.
- ⁵⁵ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ⁵⁶ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. II. Saudi Military Leadership, Organization, and Manpower*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_02.pdf.
- ⁵⁷ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. II. Saudi Military Leadership, Organization, and Manpower*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_02.pdf.
- ⁵⁸ Kechichian, pp. 61, 76, 183; Simon Henderson, *After King Fahd: Succession in Saudi Arabia* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1994), p. 35.
- ⁵⁹ Kechichian, p. 179.
- ⁶⁰ Petersen, p. 167.
- ⁶¹ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. II. Saudi Military Leadership, Organization, and Manpower*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_02.pdf.

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- ⁶² Based on Lord Halifax's account in the British Public Records Office, and cited in Robert Vitalis, "Black Gold, White Crude: An Essay on American Exceptionalism, Hierarchy, and Hegemony in the Gulf," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 185-213.
- ⁶³ David Long, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 117.
- ⁶⁴ Safran, p. 61.
- ⁶⁵ Yizraeli, p. 151. The agreement was not made public until after the war. Long, p. 116; Safran, pp. 64-67.
- ⁶⁶ Yizraeli, pp. 160-161.
- ⁶⁷ Vitalis; Safran, p. 67.
- ⁶⁸ Long, p. 116.
- ⁶⁹ Safran, pp. 142-143.
- ⁷⁰ Safran, pp. 142-143.
- ⁷¹ Safran, p. 171.
- ⁷² See the case of John West, in Steven Emerson, *The American House of Saud: The Secret Petrodollar Connection* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), pp. 351-275.
- ⁷³ Robert Kaplan, *The Arabists* (New York: Free Press, 1993), p. 77; Vitalis, pp. 193-194.
- ⁷⁴ Emerson, pp. 104-105.
- ⁷⁵ Col. James Smith, "Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization through Project Manager," August 20, 1975. This is an internal US Army document available through the Library of Congress.
- ⁷⁶ For a list of others associated with Carlyle, including former British Prime Minister John Major, see www.carlylegroup.com.
- ⁷⁷ *The Guardian*, October 31, 2001.
- ⁷⁸ AP, March 22, 1997.
- ⁷⁹ www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/opm-sang.htm. In December 2002, TRW, including, apparently, Vinnell, was acquired by the defense industry giant, Northrop Grumman.
- ⁸⁰ *Boston Herald*, April 1, 2002.
- ⁸¹ *Business Wire*, June 30, 1999.
- ⁸² *New York Times*, August 23, 1993; *USA Today*, February 1, 1994.
- ⁸³ AP, December 31, 2002; *International Herald Tribune*, November 29, 2002
- ⁸⁴ Sharaf Sabri, *The House of Saud in Commerce: A Study of Royal Entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia* (New Delhi: IS Publications, 2001), p. 92.
- ⁸⁵ *Boston Herald*, December 11, 2001
- ⁸⁶ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. III. Saudi Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_03.pdf.
- ⁸⁷ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. V: The Saudi National Guard*. Online at www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_05.pdf
- ⁸⁸ Graham, p. 22.

⁸⁹ Sabri, p. 104.

⁹⁰ It was reported, however, that `Abdallah represented the Austrian Steyr company, whose trucks are used by SANG; See Graham, p. 45. For more details on the relationship between the Al Sa`ud and the US political and economic elite, see the now dated but still valuable Emerson book cited above.

⁹¹ S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1988).

⁹² Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. II. Saudi Military Leadership, Organization, and Manpower*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_02.pdf.

⁹³ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. II. Saudi Military Leadership, Organization, and Manpower*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_02.pdf.

⁹⁴ Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century: The Military and Internal Security Dimension. II. Saudi Military Leadership, Organization, and Manpower*. Online at http://www.csis.org/burke/saudi21/SaudiMilBook_02.pdf.