

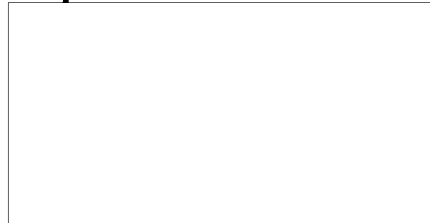


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Near East and South Asia Review



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Supplement
8 November 1985

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Near East and South Asia Review

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Thinking It Over: Saudi Arabia's Pakistani Corps

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The Qods: Iran's Active Reserve Forces

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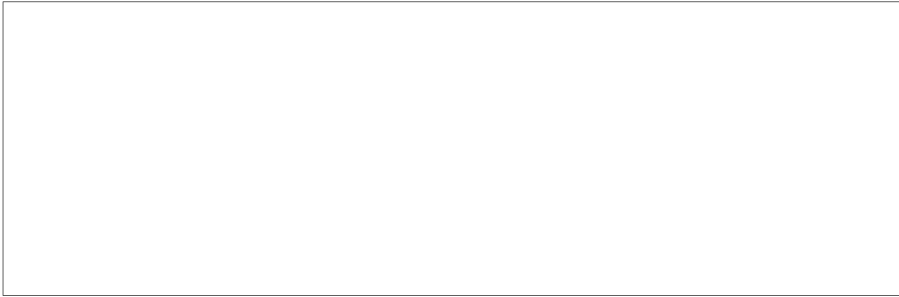
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Tehran relies on its "Qods" reserve battalions to strengthen the regular army, but coercing more men into longer terms of military service will not dramatically improve Iranian effectiveness on the battlefield, especially if Tehran cannot obtain weapons to equip them adequately.

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Crashing the Nuclear Suppliers' Club: Argentina's Activities in the Middle East and South Asia

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Nuclear cooperation with Argentina will offer several Middle Eastern and South Asian countries limited access to nuclear technology and equipment that the major supplier nations have refused to sell them, but political and technical factors will limit the Argentine role.

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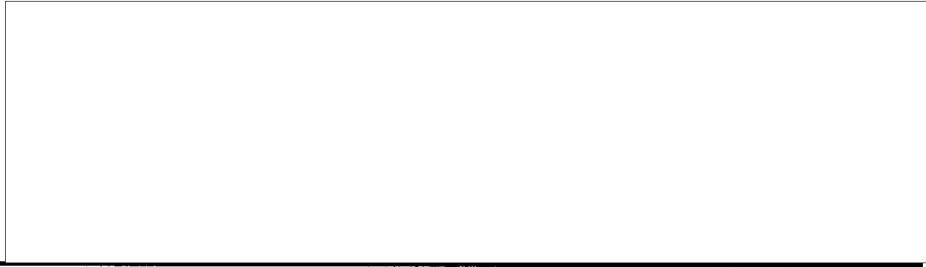
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Some articles are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the views of a single analyst; these items will be designated as noncoordinated views.



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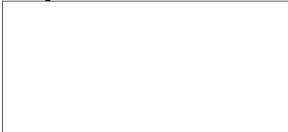
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Articles

Thinking It Over: Saudi Arabia's Pakistani Corps

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Riyadh has decided to reduce the size of the 15,000-man Pakistani military contingent garrisoned in Saudi Arabia. [redacted] Depending on the size of the reduction, the decline in remittances from Saudi Arabia could adversely affect Pakistan's military modernization programs and increase disgruntlement within the Pakistani officer corps. Some of the Pakistani troops will probably be replaced by a contingent of several thousand personnel from Bangladesh. [redacted]

Background

To improve its defenses, particularly against Israel, Saudi Arabia turned to Pakistan in the mid-1970s for troops to augment its understrength and poorly trained military establishment. At the time Pakistan was attempting to modernize its military in the wake of its defeat in the 1971 war with India, and it accepted the Saudi offer as a way to finance new programs and to help maintain the size of its military forces. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan also agreed to cooperate on a wide range of military matters, including joint exercises and Saudi training at Pakistani military schools. [redacted]

Approximately 13,000 Pakistanis serve in the Saudi army and Air Defense Command. More than half of these troops form a complete armored brigade that is based at Tabuk in northwestern Saudi Arabia. Other Pakistani units, including three independent artillery battalions, two construction engineer units, and a number of 35-mm antiaircraft batteries are also deployed near Tabuk and in southwestern Saudi Arabia near the borders with North and South Yemen. Some Pakistani personnel serve as maintenance and logistic personnel at major bases, [redacted]

An additional 1,500 Pakistanis serve in the Saudi Air Force. The vast majority are aircraft maintenance and logistic personnel, with only a few serving as flight crews or operations officers, [redacted] The Pakistanis serving as aircraft mechanics work primarily on F-15 maintenance. [redacted]

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Approximately 400 Pakistanis serve in the Saudi Navy as technicians and crewmen. The Saudi Navy is hampered by even greater personnel shortages than its sister services. The Navy rapidly expanded at the end of the 1970s and is currently taking delivery of four frigates and two replenishment ships purchased from France, which will further aggravate manpower shortages. [redacted]

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Pakistani personnel provide a number of services for Riyadh that the Saudis cannot provide from their limited manpower resources. The Saudi army does not have the personnel to man the additional armored brigade now staffed by Pakistanis. The Saudi army and Air Force also do not have the qualified personnel to perform the maintenance provided by the Pakistanis, and military readiness levels will be seriously hampered if the Pakistanis are withdrawn. [redacted]

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The Seeds of Change

Riyadh's search for additional troops to replace or augment the Pakistanis is motivated by a number of concerns:

- The presence of Shias in the Pakistani units.
- Declining oil revenues that are straining the Saudi military budget and forcing Riyadh to look for ways to reduce expenses.

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- Cultural differences between Saudi and Pakistani personnel that are probably aggravated by professional jealousies.
- Saudi questions about the utility of the Pakistani units in a crisis. [Redacted]

Riyadh's search for replacements almost certainly intensified as a result of a border clash with North Yemen in January 1984. After the initial incident, the Saudis moved additional troops into the area. Some Pakistani units were already stationed in the area, [Redacted] and additional Pakistani-manned air defense units were airlifted from Tabuk as part of the buildup. [Redacted]

Islamabad quickly objected to the deployment of Pakistani units into a potential combat situation, [Redacted] Pakistani commanders at Tabuk immediately reported to their superiors in Islamabad that some of their units were being sent to the border as part of the Saudi buildup. Islamabad protested to Riyadh that this was a violation of their agreement, and the Saudis agreed to halt the deployments, [Redacted] Riyadh and Islamabad were probably also embarrassed by rumors that North Yemen had captured some Pakistanis during the fighting. [Redacted]

Islamabad's immediate and vociferous objections to Riyadh's first attempt to use Pakistani troops in a potential combat situation dismayed the Saudis, in our view. Riyadh probably believes that the potential for additional border clashes with North Yemen will remain moderately high and that they will be unable to use Pakistani units there. This incident must have raised questions about the utility of Pakistani ground troops in any future Saudi confrontation with Iraq, Iran, or Israel, in our view. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

View From Pakistan

We believe that Islamabad places a high priority on maintaining its military assistance relationship with Riyadh. The Pakistani Government has publicly sought to obscure its difficulties with the Saudis by maintaining that relations are cordial and mutually beneficial. The Pakistanis have also insisted that they have fully complied with the terms of the military agreement. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Behind the scenes, however, the Zia government has moved to shore up the relationship by substituting Sunnis for Shia troops scheduled to serve in Saudi Arabia. According to the US Embassy in Riyadh, the head of the Pakistani military mission in Saudi Arabia, who had a reputation for being abrasive and difficult to deal with, has been relieved and recalled to Pakistan, and other disruptive individuals have also been rapidly replaced. [Redacted]

We believe that Islamabad will find it difficult to show more flexibility about Riyadh's use of Pakistani troops in combat situations. President Zia, while asserting that Pakistani troops will continue to live up to their commitment to defend Saudi territory, refuses to allow Pakistani troops to be used in any offensive operation or inter-Arab conflict. Pakistan has military advisers or support personnel in virtually every

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country in the region—including North Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran—and will not risk the political complications of having its military personnel, especially ground troops, involved on both sides of a conflict or in a dispute with another Islamic country. [redacted]

Riyadh Looks for Troops

Riyadh has negotiated with Bangladesh and Turkey to obtain troops to replace the Pakistanis serving in Saudi Arabia. The negotiations have included high-level visits to both countries, according to Embassy reporting. [redacted]

[redacted]

From the beginning, Bangladesh was eager to supply troops for Riyadh, primarily because of its desperate need for foreign exchange [redacted]

[redacted]. By mid-1985 rumors were circulating in both countries that a decision had been made to replace the Pakistani units and that a "Bangladeshi Brigade" was coming, [redacted]

We believe that an agreement may be announced as early as mid-December when the Saudi Minister of Defense visits Bangladesh. A number of factors make Bangladesh troops attractive to Riyadh:

- Riyadh believes that Bangladesh Army units receive the same training as Pakistani units and are of similar quality.
- Riyadh will probably pay considerably less for Bangladesh units.
- Bangladesh, which desperately needs additional income, will probably place fewer restrictions on the use of its personnel in Saudi Arabia.
- Bangladesh units will not have any Shia personnel. [redacted]

Outlook

Riyadh will probably further reduce the size of its Pakistani contingent in the near future and reach

agreement with Dhaka to station Bangladesh personnel in Saudi Arabia. The bulk of the Pakistani units, however, including the armored brigade and the Air Force maintenance personnel, will almost certainly remain in Saudi Arabia. Riyadh still feels the need for Pakistani personnel to provide a credible military presence in northwestern Saudi Arabia and to supply the military expertise and vital technical skills that its own forces lack, in our view. Saudi Arabia will continue cooperative military ventures with Pakistan, including joint naval exercises and the training of Saudi personnel in Pakistani military schools. [redacted]

The introduction of another contingent of foreign troops into Saudi Arabia will probably have a marginally negative impact on military efficiency, in our view. Bangladesh troops are probably capable of adequately performing their likely roles, such as logistic and maintenance. Their introduction into the Saudi army, however, will further complicate military administration and perpetuate the presence of potentially unreliable or unusable units in important positions in the army. [redacted]

The Saudis will probably have more flexibility deploying Bangladesh troops than Pakistani units. If Riyadh can utilize the Bangladeshis in potential combat situations such as border tensions with North or South Yemen, Riyadh will be better able to deal with local conflicts without having to appeal immediately to the United States for assistance. [redacted]

Any increase in Bangladesh's financial resources cannot help but improve its economy. The potential monetary benefits of serving in Saudi Arabia will improve morale within the military, in addition to providing better training opportunities. The possibility of future direct Saudi financial aid also raises Dhaka's hopes for beginning a significant military modernization program. In addition, Dhaka will receive a boost in its international prestige by being called upon to assist in protecting the holy sites of Islam. [redacted]

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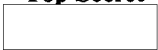
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A reduction in Saudi-Pakistani military relations will be potentially costly to Pakistan. Islamabad will lose the remittances of at least some of the 15,000 troops who are paid Saudi scale wages. In addition, Pakistani troops will no longer be able to train on the more advanced weapon systems present in the Saudi inventory. In the event of a major rupture in the relationship—unlikely, in our view—the Pakistanis might also lose Saudi financial assistance that, in the past, has helped pay for major military modernization programs, such as the F-16 fighter-bomber and the Redeye surface-to-air missile system. In addition, the diminution in its international reputation will probably rankle and embarrass Pakistan's military establishment. Reductions in the military budget, moreover, will increase the sense of frustration and disgruntlement within the officer corps. 

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The Qods: Iran's Active Reserve Forces

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Tehran relies on its "Qods" or "Jerusalem" reserve battalions to strengthen the regular army, particularly as it has suffered high casualties at the front. The formation of such reserve units in 1982 represented an effort conceived but never implemented under the Shah to boost military manpower by using war veterans.¹ The Qods are providing a pool of trained and experienced soldiers to continue the fighting. After the war, Tehran hopes the existence of a large reserve force—Revolutionary Guards Basij, and Qods—will deter new attacks on Iran.

[Redacted]

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Widening the Obligation

Iran's subsequent military efforts against Iraq continued to be ineffective while casualties increased. As a result, we suspect Iran had considerable difficulty getting a sufficient number of soldiers to volunteer for the Qods forces. The need for additional experienced manpower, however, had grown substantially by 1984—Iran had suffered 500,000 to 750,000 casualties since the beginning of the war. As a result, Rafsanjani announced that the Qods forces would no longer consist entirely of volunteers, but also of troops serving the last six months of their two-year military obligation.

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New Source of Manpower

Tehran's need to strengthen Iranian ground forces was an important reason for the formation of the Qods reserve battalions. In November 1982, Majles (Parliament) speaker Rafsanjani announced to the Iranian Supreme Defense Council that the formation of the Qods would enable Iran to take proper advantage of "volunteer popular forces with their revolutionary morale." A few months earlier, the Iranians had suffered heavy casualties in Iraq while attempting to take Al Basrah, and Tehran hoped to launch another large attack in early 1983. To improve their chances for success, the Iranian army needed more trained manpower.

[Redacted] the new system also was an attempt to dispel increasing criticism of the regime for its arbitrariness in assigning troops to the front. After additional training, all Qods forces would be sent to assist regular units at or near the front.

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[Redacted]

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Tehran moved quickly to establish and deploy the new battalions. The army began hiring discharged personnel at the start of 1983, and the first units were dispatched to the front in January. The reservists received six-month extendable contracts with the proviso that after their additional service the reservists would return to civilian life, would be recalled quarterly for three days of refresher training, and would be available for future full-time service.

[Redacted]

Tehran's creation of the Qods appears to reflect an effort to strengthen the army while keeping it small enough so that it will not become a threat to the regime. Tehran probably views the new mandatory reserve program as a means to augment manpower at the front without upsetting the balance between the

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regular military and irregular forces—Revolutionary Guard and Basij—that are considered more loyal to the regime. [Redacted]

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Role and Organization of the Qods

Qods forces are lightly armed infantry commanded mostly by regular army officers and cadre personnel.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Outlook

By establishing an obligatory reserve program Iran will be able during the coming years to increase the number of experienced personnel available for combat. [Redacted]

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Qods battalions, unlike Basij forces—the poorly trained volunteer mass militia created in 1979 and recruited and used by the Revolutionary Guard as shock troops—come under army control and take somewhat broader roles in the fighting because of their previous military experience. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] we estimate that 70 to 90 percent of the army is comprised of conscripts, and they presumably will become reservists after completing regular service. This additional manpower will help Tehran to continue its war of attrition. Coercing more men into longer terms of military service, however, probably will not dramatically improve Iranian effectiveness on the battlefield, especially if Tehran cannot obtain weapons from abroad to equip them adequately. The morale of the reserves also may deteriorate as personnel are kept on active duty for longer terms, particularly if casualties in the units increase. [Redacted]

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After the war ends, Tehran probably will maintain a small regular army, which will be less of a threat to the regime, while retaining the option of recalling a very large force of trained and experienced reservists—including Revolutionary Guard, Basij, and Qods—in the event of war. The total of these reserve forces could amount to 500,000 men or more.

Effectiveness

We believe that most Qods battalions are only as effective as regular light infantry units. Qods personnel have the advantage of having had 18 months of previous military experience and training that new recruits in the regular forces lack.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Iran already has expressed hopes that the existence of reserves will deter future aggression. For example, according to Majles speaker Rafsanjani, "... the Jerusalem [Qods] reserve forces ... can intimidate our enemies so that even the thought of imposing another war will not enter anyone's head." [Redacted]

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**Crashing the Nuclear Suppliers' Club:
Argentina's Activities in the
Middle East and South Asia**

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In our view, nuclear cooperation with Argentina will offer several Middle Eastern and South Asian countries limited access to nuclear technology and equipment that the major supplier nations have refused to sell them. Although Argentina is publicly committed to applying international safeguards to its nuclear exports, it does not demand safeguards on all of a recipient country's nuclear activities. Accordingly, to earn hard currency, trade for needed technology, or gain international prestige, Buenos Aires may be willing to offer technical assistance in such fuel cycle activities as reactor construction, reprocessing, and nuclear fuel fabrication without demanding full-scope safeguards. Political and technical factors, however, will limit the Argentine role.

[Redacted]

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Argentina's Drive To Export

We believe that Argentina has launched an intensive drive to export nuclear technology and equipment to the Third World. The Argentine nuclear industry needs new markets to compensate for slack demand at home. Sales of nuclear technology abroad are also a source of international prestige.

[Redacted]

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In our view, Argentina has the technical know-how, although only limited manufacturing capability, to supply a complete nuclear fuel cycle built around heavy-water-moderated research or power reactors. The Argentine Atomic Energy Commission has already exported a research reactor to Peru that runs on highly enriched uranium. We believe that a new unsafeguarded Argentine enrichment plant may be capable of producing limited quantities of low-enriched fuel for power or research reactors within a few years.

Our Embassy in Buenos Aires reported in June that the two countries first signed a nuclear agreement in 1974, but, formal negotiations on cooperation did not begin until 1982.

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[Redacted]

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Pakistan.

[Redacted]

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A Year of Intense Activity

India. Argentina and India are considering an exchange of nuclear technology

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We believe that Pakistani-Argentine cooperation will remain limited to minor information exchanges and visits because Islamabad is meeting its equipment and training requirements from Japanese and West European sources. If forced to choose between India and Pakistan, Buenos Aires will probably decide for closer nuclear ties to India because of the potentially greater technical and economic payoff. [Redacted]

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Libya. We believe that Libya is also on the list of potential Argentine partners. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Algeria. An agreement this summer with Algeria specifies that Argentina will sell a research reactor, low-enriched uranium fuel, and a nuclear fuel fabrication plant to Algeria. We believe that Algeria accepted the Argentine proposal over a competing US offer that had been under negotiation for two years because Buenos Aires was willing to impose fewer safeguards. Buenos Aires is publicly committed to requiring safeguards only on what it exports, while the US offer required Algeria to accept safeguards on all present and future nuclear facilities. This fall a

Outlook: Under-the-Table Technology Transfer
We believe that Argentina would harm US nuclear nonproliferation policy interests in the Middle East and South Asia by offering some high-risk countries

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access to technology through scientific exchanges, including sensitive aspects of the fuel cycle such as reprocessing, or information obtained from the major supplier countries. Argentina could build a heavy-water-moderated, natural-uranium-fueled research reactor for Iraq or help India improve its power reactor design. 

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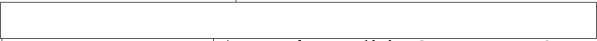
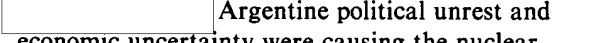
We believe that several factors will limit Argentina's role as a nuclear supplier in the Middle East and South Asia:


- Argentina wants to be accepted as a responsible nuclear exporter and is sensitive to major supplier state opinion, but Argentine Foreign Ministry and nuclear program officials seem to differ on the limits of permissible conduct. Last March Argentine Foreign Ministry officials told the US Embassy that they would not "break the fence" placed around India's nuclear development by supplier nations. Argentine nuclear officials, however, appear to believe that the occasional technical expert can discreetly slip under that "fence."

- Regional rivalries may force Argentina to choose sides in current disputes, such as the Iran-Iraq war.

- Buenos Aires may not be able to deliver equipment in a timely manner. 

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 Argentine political unrest and economic uncertainty were causing the nuclear industry to stagnate. For example, we speculate that Algeria will wait several years for completion of its research reactor and fuel fabrication plant.

- We believe that India, Pakistan, and probably Iran will be able to find alternative sources to meet most of their equipment needs by buying dual-purpose items on a piecemeal basis on the world nuclear grey market. 

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