

## **GRC to release findings of Gulf Yearbook 2006-2007**

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The Gulf Research Center (GRC) will conduct its fourth annual conference entitled "The Gulf in 2006-07" in Dubai tomorrow, and release a preliminary report of the Gulf Yearbook 2006-07, the think tank's premier annual publication.

The report highlights and forecasts the key developments of the past and the year ahead. The essays by a team of scholars delve into political, diplomatic, and economic and security issues related to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as Iran, Iraq and Yemen. The Gulf Yearbook will be published in Arabic and English and will be available in print and digital formats by the end of March.

The conference and workshop thereafter on "Consequences of US policy for the Gulf region" will be attended by a number of high-level government officials, intellectuals and business executives from the Gulf region and outside.

According to the GRC chairman, Abdulaziz Sager: "The conference is being held at a time when the Gulf region is passing through a dangerous phase, especially in light of the tragic situation in Iraq, which is akin to a civil war, and holds the potential to disintegrate. There is also the complication of the Iranian nuclear file in light of the faltering diplomatic efforts and the sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, which may even lead to an armed confrontation."

The Gulf Yearbook "discerns and analyzes the new developments in the region, but avoids preconceived judgments in interpreting them," Sager added.

The publication comprises statistics and analyses relating to defense issues in the GCC countries, especially policies relating to arms, training, military coordination in the context of the plan to develop and restructure the Peninsula Shield. It also throws light on environmental concerns, which are of utmost importance because of their existing and potential implications for sustainable development in the region.

The positions of the GCC countries on the Iraq crisis, the Palestinian question and the recent developments it has witnessed under the Hamas government, as well as the Israeli war on Lebanon, are some of the other issues that are addressed in the Gulf Yearbook.

In the realm of international relations, the wide-ranging ties between the GCC countries and United States, European Union, Asia, among others are evaluated in detail.

Given the increase in the government revenues due to high oil prices and the continued economic reform in the GCC countries during the last year, the publication has significant space devoted to the economic developments in the region. It also makes projection on the state of the economy during the year ahead.

The Yearbook discussion will be followed by the GRC annual workshop on "Consequences of US Policy for the Gulf Region" on Jan. 11 and 12. The topic is a reflection of the paramount importance of the approaches and transformations in the US foreign policy toward Iraq and Iran.

The first of the four-session workshop will focus on analyzing the objectives of the US policy in the Gulf and how these have been translated into practice.

While the second session will assess the current and potential costs of these strategies, the third round of discussions will focus on the US failures and their ramifications for the region. The last session will look at the impact of the US failures in the Gulf on the international community and how it would affect the US's image and leadership role as the world's sole superpower.