

Radical Middle East States and U.S. Policy

by [Barry Rubin \(/experts/barry-rubin\)](/experts/barry-rubin)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Barry Rubin was a senior fellow at the Institute from 1988-1993 and a visiting fellow frequently thereafter. He passed at the age of 64 in February 2014.



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The challenge posed to the United States by the radical regimes in the Middle East -- Libya, Iraq, Iran, and Syria - is one of the most important foreign policy issues facing Washington today. These regimes, although weakened by the demise of the USSR, have by no means been disabled. They have dragged the U.S. into many conflicts: Iraq invaded Kuwait; Iran held U.S. diplomats hostage for over one year in Tehran, destabilized the region by aiding Islamic revolutionaries, and attacked tankers in the Persian Gulf; Libya assaulted U.S. forces and organized terrorist attacks; and Syria effectively occupied Lebanon, sponsored terrorism, and has exacerbated the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In this Policy Paper, Barry Rubin examines these radical regimes' aggression towards the United States and the U.S. policies that have failed to deter them. He argues, despite the new global environment, none of these states has scaled down its ambitions or long-term goals. These radical regimes still hope to pursue their goals of expansion and aggression by relying on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The United States cannot transform the radical regimes into moderates; instead it must take advantage of its current situation and aggressively work to deter them.

- **31 pages**

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