

'The Sword of the Arabs':

Iraq's Strategic Weapons

by [Michael Eisenstadt \(/experts/michael-eisenstadt\)](/experts/michael-eisenstadt)

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Since the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq has intensified, expanded, and diversified its effort to enhance its strategic capabilities, including efforts to develop or acquire unconventional weapons, long-range strike systems, and strategic reconnaissance systems. Iraq has traditionally aspired to be a regional power and its new strategic capabilities provide it with the means to realize that ambition. In attempting to stake out a hegemonic role in the Arab world, Iraq has cast itself as the leader of pan-Arabism and has spearheaded efforts to diminish U.S. influence in the region and resurrect a military alliance against Israel.

In this Policy Paper, Michael Eisenstadt evaluates Iraq's strategic weapons programs and assesses what impact these programs will have on the on the tenuous Middle East balance of power. He argues that in an already tense regional environment, Iraq's build-up increases the chance for miscalculation and military escalation.

- **33 pages**

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