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Blinken Picks Up the Phone to Firm Up Alliances—Except with Most Gulf Countries

by [Simon Henderson](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Simon Henderson](#)

Simon Henderson is the Baker fellow and director of the Bernstein Program on Gulf and Energy Policy at The Washington Institute, specializing in energy matters and the conservative Arab states of the Persian Gulf.



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The change of administrations and the realities of COVID-era diplomacy may give Gulf leaders a sense that they are being kept at a distance on key issues, including Iran’s nuclear program.

A new administration, a new diplomatic A-list. Or so it would seem. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been calling his counterparts across the world. But there are some notable omissions, for example, Egypt, where President Sisi was Donald Trump’s “favorite dictator.” And of the Gulf countries, as of Feb. 4, only the United Arab Emirates has had the conversation. Across the cocktails and canapes—which, in the COVID-19 era are more proverbial than real—there is a mixture of discreet muttering and even glee...

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