Even as the Biden administration tries to shrink the centrality of the Middle East in American foreign policy, the region has a way of claiming its place, evidenced not least by the fact that the president’s first use of military force was to strike Iranian-backed militia outposts in Syria. Administrations may change, but the problems of the Middle East endure.

When the new administration inherited a daunting regional agenda from its predecessor, a key player in the handover was then-assistant secretary of state David Schenker, the department’s most senior official with responsibility for the Middle East. Now having returned to The Washington Institute after nineteen months in government, he will participate in a virtual Policy Forum to discuss his experience in the Near East Bureau, which included developing and implementing U.S. strategy on Chinese influence in the region, narrowing the rift between Qatar and neighboring Gulf states, addressing the intractable conflicts in Libya and Yemen, consolidating the
Abraham Accords, launching Lebanon-Israel border talks, and countering Iran’s malign influence. He will also draw on his firsthand observations to offer recommendations for the new administration.

Watch a live webcast of this conversation starting at 1:00 p.m. EST on Wednesday, March 10, 2021

David Schenker, a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, served as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs from June 5, 2019, through January 2021. In that capacity, he was the principal Middle East advisor to the secretary of state and the senior official overseeing the conduct of U.S. policy throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Previously, he was the Institute’s Aufzien Fellow and, from 2002 to 2006, served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as Levant country director.

Robert Satloff has been the Institute’s executive director since 1993, overseeing all of its operations and leading its team of Middle East scholars, experts, and policy practitioners. He also holds the Institute’s Howard P. Berkowitz Chair in U.S. Middle East Policy.

The Policy Forum series is made possible through the generosity of the Florence and Robert Kaufman Family.
A New “Working” Agenda to Solve the Syrian Puzzle

Mar 5, 2021

Ammar Al-Musarea

Palestinian Elections: How Real, and with What Results

Mar 5, 2021

Michael Milstein

TOPICS

U.S. Policy

STAY UP TO DATE

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS
The Washington Institute seeks to advance a balanced and realistic understanding of American interests in the Middle East and to promote the policies that secure them.

The Institute is a 501(c)3 organization; all donations are tax-deductible.