Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the Limits of Gulf Unity

by April Longley Alley **(/experts/april-longley-alley)**

Spring 2026

Also published in Middle East Journal

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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If left unchecked, the reemerging rift between the two Gulf powerhouses could fragment the region into competing poles, further roil markets, and destabilize fragile states in the area.

The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran temporarily papered over a rift between two Gulf powerhouses: Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Finding themselves on the frontlines of a war they worked hard to prevent, these Gulf states initially put differences aside publicly and circled the wagons. As in other crises, the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council came together, issuing a statement of solidarity and referencing their commitment to mutual defense. The leaders of Saudi Arabia and the UAE spoke directly, breaking their silence since the relationship soured in December. Yet the patch is temporary. Significant structural, policy, and personal differences remain and are already resurfacing...

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