

U.S. Policy Toward Syria

by [Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](/experts/dennis-ross)

Apr 11, 2013

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](/experts/dennis-ross)

Dennis Ross, a former special assistant to President Barack Obama, is the counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute.



Articles & Testimony

The Institute's counselor testified before the Senate regarding the need for action on Syria. The following is an excerpt from his prepared remarks; download the PDF to read the full testimony, or [read the version republished in Foreign Policy under the title "It's Time to Act in Syria."](#) (http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/18/its_time_to_act_in_syria)

"...There can be no doubt that the ongoing conflict in Syria confronts us with terrible challenges. A humanitarian catastrophe gets worse by the day, as nearly a quarter of Syria's population may now be displaced internally or externally and the death toll of close to 80,000 continues to rise inexorably. But it is not just our conscience that is affected by this gruesome war. Our interests are also engaged because the conflict is unlikely to remain confined to Syria. Indeed, the more Syria unravels, the more the state comes apart, the more refugees flee to the neighboring states -- the more each of Syria's neighbors will be threatened with increased instability.

Even assuming that al Qaeda does not establish itself in what may be the emerging failed state of Syria, the refugee flow already constitutes a growing danger to Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. None of these states can easily absorb the numbers -- and in the case of Lebanon and Iraq, the sectarian differences may rekindle civil conflicts we'd hoped had been relegated to the past. Turkey may face less of problem in this regard and may also be more capable of managing the growing influx of refugees, but it too is facing growing difficulties in absorbing the numbers and managing the camps. Already there have been riots in the camps and we should not assume these are one-time events. But, of course, it is not just the flow of refugees that endangers Syria's neighbors and the region..." ❖

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Coordinated Iran Sanctions Require Coordinated Enforcement

Apr 19, 2024



Matthew Levitt

(/policy-analysis/coordinated-iran-sanctions-require-coordinated-enforcement)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

China's Military Objectives and Operational Experience in the Middle East

Apr 19, 2024



Grant Rumley

(/policy-analysis/chinas-military-objectives-and-operational-experience-middle-east)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

The Middle East's Perilous Moment: Policy Implications and Escalation Risks

Apr 18, 2024



Dana Stroul,
Zohar Palti,
Farzin Nadimi

(/policy-analysis/middle-east-s-perilous-moment-policy-implications-and-escalation-risks)

TOPICS

Arab & Islamic Politics (/policy-analysis/arab-islamic-politics)

Democracy & Reform (/policy-analysis/democracy-reform)

U.S. Policy (/policy-analysis/us-policy)

REGIONS & COUNTRIES

Syria (/policy-
analysis/syria)