

## With Neighbors Like These: Iraq and the Arab States on Its Borders

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In-Depth Reports

**F**rom high-level diplomatic tours to multilateral summits in Baghdad and Sharm al-Sheikh, Washington has devoted increasing attention to Iraq's Arab neighbors. Yet, although speculation about the role of regional states in stabilizing Iraq has become something of a cottage industry in Washington, much of this analysis has focused on non-Arab neighbors Iran and Turkey. And when Iraq's immediate Arab neighbors are discussed, the resultant policy advice has tended to suffer from alarmist assumptions about their susceptibility to "spillover" from Iraq, unrealistic hopes about their potential contributions to Iraqi stability, or both.

To fill this vacuum, The Washington Institute commissioned a Policy Focus compilation on the status and prospects of four Arab states -- Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Syria -- in relation to U.S. interests in Iraq. Guided by two key questions -- What is each neighbor's actual effect on events in Iraq? And how do events in Iraq actually affect each neighbor? -- the authors address the different and often conflicting interests that guide these countries in their policies toward Iraq, particularly in reaction to Iran's growing regional ambitions. In the end, they argue, Iraq cannot depend on its neighbors to address problems that are primarily internal in nature. Washington will need to rethink its engagement with these countries accordingly, avoiding the temptation to link the Iraq crisis with other regional issues.

\*With contributions by [Simon Henderson \(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC10.php?CID=18\)](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC10.php?CID=18), Barry Rubin, and [David Schenker \(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC10.php?CID=42\)](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC10.php?CID=42)

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