

The Middle East Predicament

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The United States has had critical interests in the Middle East for as long as it has been a global power. Securing the flow of the region's oil to the world economy has always been a central priority. During the Cold War, competition with the Soviet Union for Middle Eastern allies was another. And helping to protect Israel while keeping the Arab-Israeli conflict from escalating to Armageddon has long been a third. Still, even as Washington dealt with crises ranging from Iranian hostage-taking to Iraqi aggression to Arab-Israeli fighting, its main foreign policy agenda has generally focused elsewhere, such as in Europe or Asia. Now, for the first time in U.S. history, that is no longer true. . . .

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