

U.S. Policy in the Middle East Amid Great Power Competition

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Viewing regional issues through this broader strategic lens will require Washington to accept painful trade-offs and take a tougher stance with difficult allies.

The following is an excerpt from an essay originally published as part of the collection [The Future of Conservative Internationalism](#) (Reagan Institute Strategy Group, 2020). [Download the PDF to read the full text.](#)

The United States needs a strategy for securing its interests in the Middle East that both accords with its broader strategy of great power competition and seeks to accomplish what is needed at a lower, sustainable level of resources. Such a policy should feature a greater reliance on diplomacy and deterrence and a greater reliance on partners when conflict becomes inevitable. While some reallocation of military resources from the Middle East to other regions is inevitable, the United States should not withdraw them from the region entirely, as reinserting them when the need arises may prove difficult. However, we can and should refocus our own exertions where we add the greatest value and leave other tasks to partners. It is important that the United States not look at the Middle East as a series of problems that demand American solutions. Often a dollar invested in maintaining stability and security where they exist will yield a greater return for U.S. interests than one invested in seeking to resolve a conflict...