

INFORM. INSPIRE. DEVELOP CIVIC LEADERS.

THE POLICY CIRCLE

FOREIGN POLICY: THE MIDDLE EAST



➤ WHAT IS FOREIGN POLICY? ◀

FOREIGN POLICY IS GENERAL OBJECTIVES THAT GUIDE THE ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS OF ONE STATE IN ITS INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER STATES. THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY IS INFLUENCED BY DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS, THE POLICIES OR BEHAVIOUR OF OTHER STATES, OR PLANS TO ADVANCE SPECIFIC GEOPOLITICAL DESIGNS. LEOPOLD VON RANKE EMPHASIZED THE PRIMACY OF GEOGRAPHY AND EXTERNAL THREATS IN SHAPING FOREIGN POLICY, BUT LATER WRITERS EMPHASIZED DOMESTIC FACTORS. DIPLOMACY IS THE TOOL OF FOREIGN POLICY, AND WAR, ALLIANCES, AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE MAY ALL BE MANIFESTATIONS OF IT.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IS CRAFTED PRINCIPALLY IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. AT THE CABINET LEVEL, THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE ALSO PLAY KEY ROLES IN SHAPING POLICY, DETERMINING PRIORITIES, AND IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY. THE U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE, UNDER THE STATE DEPARTMENT, TRAINS AND EMPLOYS DIPLOMATS WHO ARE POSTED AT U.S. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO CARRY OUT U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. IN THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, LAWMAKERS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE DO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FOREIGN POLICY; ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS HAVE CONSTITUTIONALLY-MANDATED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS



➤ FACTS TO KNOW ◀



OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, THE MIDDLE EAST HAS EXPERIENCED MUCH UPHEAVAL. UPRISINGS ACROSS THE REGION HAVE “CHALLENGED AUTOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS,” “TOPPLED LONGTIME DICTATORS,” AND RESULTED IN MULTIPLE CIVIL WARS, ALL OF WHICH HAVE “LEFT REGIONAL LEADERS INTENTLY FOCUSED ON REGIME SECURITY.”

THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 60,000 U.S. TROOPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, MAINLY IN QATAR, BAHRAIN, KUWAIT, THE UAE, SAUDI ARABIA, AND IRAQ. A MORE THAN 150,000 WERE BASED THERE DURING THE BUSH AND EARLY OBAMA ADMINISTRATIONS. IN AFGHANISTAN IN PARTICULAR, THE U.S. PLANS TO FULLY REMOVE ITS REMAINING 3,500 TROOPS BY SEPTEMBER 11, 2021.

THROUGH ALLIANCES OR ACTIVE MILITARY ENGAGEMENT, THE U.S. IS INVOLVED IN AND AFFECTED BY THE CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA, THE CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN, THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, CONFLICT BETWEEN HEZBOLLAH AND ISRAEL, CONFLICT WITH THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN, TENSION WITH IRAN, DISAGREEMENTS WITH SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE GLOBAL THREAT OF ISIS.

CIVILIANS SUFFER THROUGH ARMED CONFLICTS IN THE REGION, PARTICULARLY THOSE CAUGHT IN THE CIVIL WARS IN YEMEN AND SYRIA. HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORTS THAT AS OF THE END OF 2020, THERE HAVE BEEN MORE THAN 18,400 CIVILIAN DEATHS IN YEMEN AND MORE THAN 9.3 MILLION SYRIANS HAVE BECOME FOOD INSECURE.

➤ GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES ◀



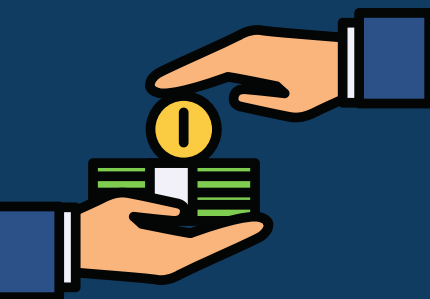
THE U.S. HAS SPENT OVER \$840 BILLION ON THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

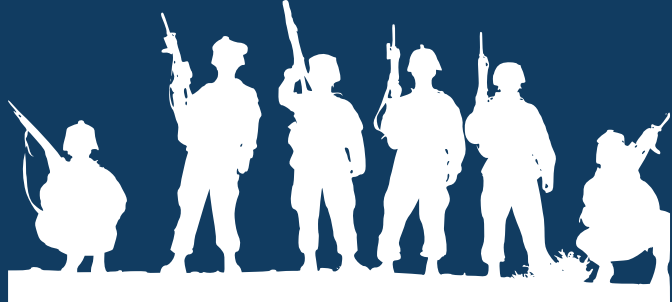
ACCORDING TO A REPORT BY THE RAND CORP., THE MIDDLE EAST RECEIVES MORE THAN 50% OF ALL U.S. GLOBAL MILITARY AID.



OF THE ROUGHLY \$6 BILLION IN U.S. GLOBAL FOREIGN MILITARY FINANCING APPORTIONED IN 2019, OVER 80% WENT TO ISRAEL, EGYPT, AND JORDAN

BETWEEN 2013 AND 2017, ALMOST HALF OF U.S. ARMS EXPORTS WENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST, PRIMARILY TO SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL AS EGYPT AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. THE U.S. IS ALSO ISRAEL'S SINGLE LARGEST TRADING PARTNER, PRIMARILY IN SEMICONDUCTORS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.





➤ FRAMING THE ISSUE ◀



OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, THE MIDDLE EAST HAS EXPERIENCED MUCH UPHEAVAL. UPRISINGS ACROSS THE REGION HAVE “CHALLENGED AUTOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS,” “TOPPLED LONGTIME DICTATORS,” AND RESULTED IN MULTIPLE CIVIL WARS, ALL OF WHICH HAVE “LEFT REGIONAL LEADERS INTENTLY FOCUSED ON REGIME SECURITY.”

THE U.S. AND IRAN SUPPORT OPPOSING SIDES IN SEVERAL REGIONAL CONFLICTS, INCLUDING IN SYRIA (THE U.S. SUPPORTS THE SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES AND IRAN SUPPORTS THE ASSAD REGIME), YEMEN (THE U.S. HAS SUPPORTED THE SAUDI-LED COALITION AND IRAN HAS REPORTEDLY SUPPORTED THE HOUTHİ REBELS), AND LEBANON (IRAN SUPPORTS HEZBOLLAH). IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND MISSILE PROGRAM HAVE PROMPTED THE U.S. TO IMPOSE A NUMBER OF SANCTIONS.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT MAINTAINS THAT “A CENTRAL GOAL OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY HAS BEEN THE PROMOTION OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AS EMBODIED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.” ACCORDING TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST “WITH VIRTUALLY NO EXCEPTIONS GOVERNMENTS HAVE DISPLAYED A SHOCKING INTOLERANCE FOR THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY.”

THE CHALLENGE TO U.S. POLICY IS HOW TO PROTECT REMAINING INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS COULD INCLUDE RELYING MORE ON REGIONAL PARTNERS, ALTHOUGH MANY SAY THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IS THE ONLY INSURANCE POLICY FOR STABILITY. OTHERS MAINTAIN U.S. MILITARY FORCE HAS MADE LITTLE DIFFERENCE OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, AND THE FOCUS SHOULD SHIFT TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AID.



POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS



MAINTAINING STRONG ALLIANCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS CENTRAL TO U.S. OBJECTIVES OF ENSURING STABILITY IN THE REGION. ALLIES INCLUDE THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL, A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN 1981 THAT SEEKS TO COORDINATE AND CONNECT ITS MEMBERS' POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. MEMBERS INCLUDE THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN, THE STATE OF KUWAIT, THE SULTANATE OF OMAN, THE STATE OF QATAR, THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

IN LEBANON, THE U.S. SEEKS TO "HELP PRESERVE ITS INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONAL UNITY, AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY." THE U.S. IS LEBANON'S PRIMARY SECURITY PARTNER; IT SUPPORTS STATE INSTITUTIONS BY PROVIDING BILATERAL FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON TO COUNTER THE INFLUENCE OF HEZBOLLAH, WHICH IS LARGELY FUNDED BY IRAN, AS WELL AS THAT OF ISIS NEAR LEBANON'S BORDER WITH SYRIA.

IN 2018, THE U.S. AND JORDAN SIGNED A "NON-BINDING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING" THAT MADE THE U.S. JORDAN'S SINGLE LARGEST PROVIDER OF BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH IS USED FOR DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AGRICULTURE, AND HUMANITARIAN AID TO COMMUNITIES IN JORDAN THAT HOST REFUGEES FROM SYRIA.

➤ WHAT YOU CAN DO ◀

MEASURE -

FIND OUT HOW YOUR STATE AND DISTRICT ARE AFFECTED BY FOREIGN POLICY. ARE THERE MANY VETERANS IN YOUR CITY OR COMMUNITY? DOES YOUR CITY OR COMMUNITY HAVE A LARGE IMMIGRANT POPULATION? SEARCH ON YOUR STATE OR MUNICIPALITY'S WEBSITE FOR A COMMUNITY OR HUMAN SERVICES TAB, OR SEARCH FOR TERMS SUCH AS "IMMIGRATION," IN THE SEARCH BAR.



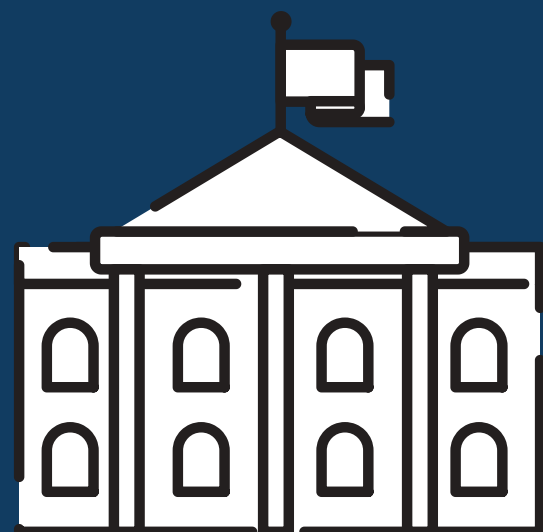
IDENTIFY -

WHAT STEPS HAVE YOUR STATE'S OR COMMUNITY'S ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS TAKEN? DOES ONE OF YOUR REPRESENTATIVES SERVE ON ONE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES ADDRESSING FOREIGN AFFAIRS?



REACH OUT -

FOSTER COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, YOUR LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS.



PLAN -
SET MILESTONES BASED ON YOUR STATE'S LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR OR LOCAL COMMUNITY CALENDAR.



EXECUTE -

KEEP TRACK OF BILLS IN CONGRESS RELATED TO THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION. KNOW WHO DECIDES POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH INFORMATION FROM THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS. THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS IS THE POINT OF CONTACT FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION. SEE IF YOUR CITY OR STATE HAS COMPANIES THAT ENGAGE INTERNATIONALLY. IF POSSIBLE, ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ABOUT AID, FOREIGN POLICY, AND WHAT YOUR TAX DOLLARS ARE GOING TO SUPPORT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

