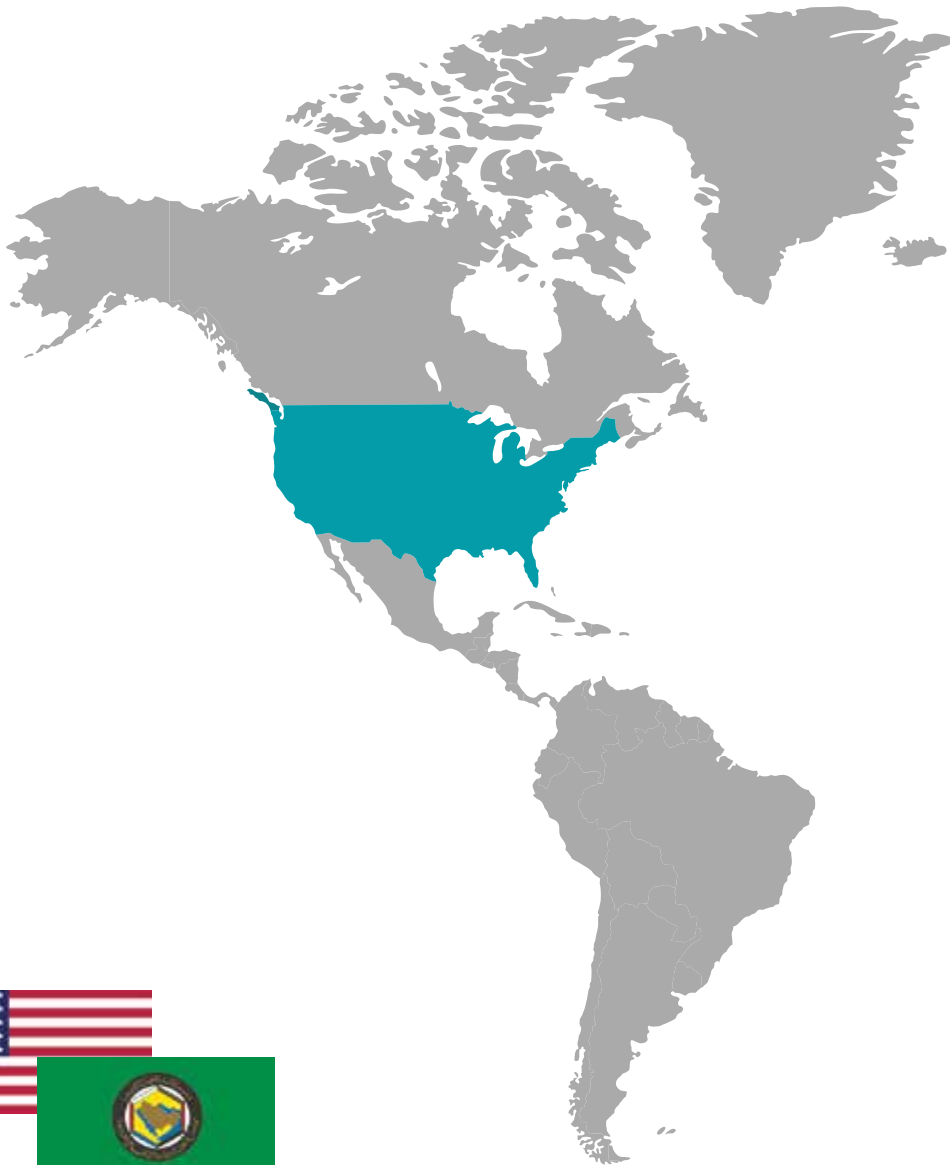


Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

U.S. - GCC Relations



1. Key Domestic Developments

Historically, midterm elections in the United States result in the incumbent president's party losing a significant number of seats. In November 2022, however, Democrats outperformed this trend by retaining control of the Senate and stopping what many assumed would be a "red wave" in Republican victories. The Republicans won control of the House of Representatives after gaining nine votes to reach a total of 222 seats, thus passing the threshold of 218 seats. Yet, the final tally was narrower than initially expected. Overall, the midterm results are considered a setback for the Republican prospects of reclaiming the White House in the 2024 presidential elections.

Despite being the first former president to face criminal charges, President Donald Trump continues leading the GOP presidential nomination over Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis. President Biden has also announced his re-election bid, setting the scene for a potential Biden-Trump rematch. Before his re-election bid, President Biden announced that his domestic policy adviser, Susan Rice, would step down after serving two years and playing an influential role in shaping the current immigration policy, which will be a crucial issue in the 2024 presidential election. President Biden faces low approval ratings due to inflation, high crime rates, restrictive immigration policies, and other domestic matters. In addition, President Biden's age has been a cause for concern with regard to his run for re-election, as he would be the oldest president in American history to serve, at 86 years old by the end of his second term, if re-elected.

Domestic challenges and political polarization between the two sides of the American political divide remain as stark as ever. To defy President Biden, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that raised the government's \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling but also attached sweeping cuts for the upcoming years. Voters have also been split on numerous issues after suffering from high

consumer and interest rates. In addition, gas prices surged to \$4 per gallon in March 2022, their highest since 2008. For the Republicans, the blame for these developments falls on President Biden, whereas Democrats are keen to emphasize that the recent spikes are related to the Ukraine crisis.



There has also been deep polarization regarding crime and gun control following numerous mass shootings across the country. Democrats have been pushing for stricter gun control laws and tougher regulations, such as banning assault weapons. In contrast, Republicans have fought back for their legal right to keep and bear arms under the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution. Although President Biden and the Democrats promoted the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act passed in June 2022 to provide stricter gun-safety laws, Republicans continue identifying mental health issues as a top cause of public shootings. Abortion was another critical topic in the midterm elections. Democrats pushed to protect the right to have an abortion, while Republicans continued to support restrictive abortion laws, eventually passing a law passing down abortion regulation to the states—a right no longer guaranteed under the US Constitution. Following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling in June 2022 overturning *Roe v. Wade*, abortion was cited as a significant contributor to voter turnout, particularly among young women, and continues to be a deeply divided issue among American voters.



Key US Economic and Social Data

- GDP: \$23.32 trillion (2021)
- GDP per capita: \$70,248.63 (2021)
- Annual Growth Rate: 5.9% (2021)

- Inflation: 5% (2021)
- Population: 331.9 million (2021)

- Unemployment Rate: 5.3% (2021)
- Credit Rating: Standard & Poor: AA+ with a stable outlook. Moody: Aaa with a stable outlook. Fitch: AAA with a stable outlook. DBRS: AAA with a stable outlook.

The COVID-19 pandemic signaled the 2020 recession, the worst recession since the Great Depression, causing the US economy to contract by 3.5%. Due to states requiring non-essential businesses to shut down, the US economy lost around 20.6 million jobs, with the unemployment rate peaking at 14.8% in April 2020. However, GDP growth recovered to 5.7% in 2021 with the unemployment rate falling to a healthy 5.3%. Despite these developments, economists estimate a mere 0.3% average GDP growth and a 70% chance of another US recession in 2023. In March 2023, US annual inflation stood at 5%, the lowest price increase rate since 2021. Housing is considered the most significant contributing factor to price increases, which offsets the impact of decreasing energy prices.

2. US Foreign Policy

In October 2022, the White House released the US National Security Strategy with the stated goal of a “free, open, prosperous, and secure international order.” The strategy outlines how the US will tackle “shared challenges,” particularly climate change, pandemics, and economic turbulence--by investing in national power to maintain a competitive edge through implementing a modern industrial and innovation strategy, supporting American citizens, and strengthening democracy.

The National Security Strategy also outlines the US’ efforts to “build the strongest possible coalitions” through transformative cooperation with alliances such as NATO, AUKUS, Five Eyes, Quad, and the G7.

The National Security Strategy’s global priorities involve China and Russia. Regarding China, the White House provided a three-part strategy: invest in the foundations of the US’ strength, align US efforts with allies and partners, and compete responsibly with China. Regarding Russia, the US aims to make Russia’s involvement in Ukraine a strategic failure. Other strategies include promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, deepening the US alliance with Europe, fostering democracy and shared prosperity in the Western Hemisphere, supporting de-escalation and integration in the Middle East, maintaining a peaceful Arctic, and protecting sea, air, and space.

Another pillar in the National Security Strategy is building and strengthening 21st-century US-Africa partnerships, as President Biden emphasizes Africa with the new US Africa Strategy. To strengthen ties with African partners, President Biden held the US-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington from December 13-15, 2022, with an aim to enhance relations with African partners. The meeting highlighted the importance of developing new economic engagement, cooperating to strengthen regional and global health, promoting food security, advancing peace and security, and fighting climate change. The summit was the first to include most of Africa’s leaders in Washington since 2014.

Key Foreign Policy Initiatives

- The US and South Korea announced a new agreement to deter North Korea, including deploying a nuclear-armed submarine.
- The US president visited Northern Ireland to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and seeks to support a post-Brexit trade deal.

- The US and Canada agreed to expand their authority to expand restrictions on asylum seekers at the US-Canada border.
- The US imposed further sanctions on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.
- The US announced a new foreign policy for Africa.
- With the Biden administration, the US rejoined the Paris Climate Accords and the World Health Organization.

President Biden has faced criticism over several foreign policy initiatives. The sudden and chaotic withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, which opened the door for the Taliban to control Kabul and seize overall political power, significantly damaged US international credibility. In terms of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the crisis has brought forward a newfound unity in the Western alliance, but there are also concerns that some of the steps announced by the US could lead to a further increase in tensions rather than bringing the crisis to an end. This includes, for example, President Biden stating that the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrant for Russian President Putin was justified. Moreover, the US announced that it would stop sharing data on nuclear weapons with Russia under the New START treaty.

In August 2022, a US diplomatic visit to Taiwan was condemned by China, who viewed the trip as a US deviation from its “One China” policy. Following the meetings, China imposed sanctions on Taiwanese political figures and warned the US to avoid further interference. The visits also yielded negative reactions internationally. To repair US-China relations, President Biden and President Xi held a three-hour meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Indonesia in November 2022. Both leaders agreed to make an attempt to get their bilateral ties back on track, but little progress could be seen as of May 2023.

In the Middle East, the US did welcome the China-brokered deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran from March 2023 with US Secretary of State Blinken calling it “positive.” In Israel,

the Biden administration has been critical of its new settlements law that has set the stage for restoring illegal settlements north of the occupied West Bank. The US has also denounced recent statements by far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who claimed that the Palestinian people are “an invention” of the past century.

3. US-GCC Fact Sheet

- US trade in goods with GCC countries in 2022 (USD):

Country	Exports	Imports	Balance
Saudi Arabia	\$11,565.3M	\$23,461.7M	\$-11,896.4M
United Arab Emirates	\$20,853.5M	\$6,908.2M	\$13,945.4M
Qatar	\$3,647.0M	\$2,921.7M	\$725.4M
Oman	\$1,487.3M	\$2,727.7M	\$-1,240.4M
Bahrain	\$952.4M	\$1,893.7M	\$-941.2M
Kuwait	\$3,398.3M	\$2,049.6M	\$1,348.7M

Source: US Census Bureau

Establishment of Diplomatic Relationships

- US-GCC Diplomatic Relations: Saudi Arabia (1940 following recognition in 1931), Kuwait (1961), Bahrain (1971), United Arab Emirates (1972), Qatar (1972), and Oman (1972).

Current Diplomatic Representation

- US Embassy in Riyadh: Ambassador Michael Alan Ratney.
 - Consulate General Dhahran: Consulate General David Edginton.
 - Consulate General Jeddah: Consulate General Faris Y. Asad.
- Embassy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Washington: Ambassador H.R.H. Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



- Consulate General Houston: Consulate General Mr. Saad Hamad Aljebreen.
- Consulate General Los Angeles: Consulate General Mr. Fawaz Alshubaili.
- Consulate General New York: Consulate General H.E. Mr. Hatem Al Gahamdi.

Key US Officials with Responsibility for the Gulf Region

- US Department of State:
 - 71st Secretary of State: Antony J. Blinken
 - Deputy Secretary of State: Wendy R. Sherman
 - Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs:
 - Assistant Secretary: Barbara A. Leaf
 - Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary: Yael Lempert.
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary: Ethan A. Goldrich
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iran, Iraq, and Public Diplomacy: Jennifer Gavito
 - Special Representative for Palestinian Affairs: Hady Amr
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Israeli-Palestinian Affairs: Andrew P. Miller
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs: Daniel Benaim
 - US Special Envoy for Yemen: Timothy A. Lenderking
 - US Special Envoy for Iran: Robert Malley

- US Department of Defense:
 - 28th Secretary of Defense: Lloyd James Austin III
 - Under Secretary of Defense: Colin Kahl
 - Assistant Secretary of Defense of International Security Affairs: Celeste A. Wallander
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East: Dana Stroul

- National Security Council:
 - National Security Advisor: Jake Sullivan
 - Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa: Brett McGurk
 - Senior Director for the Middle East: Stephanie Hallet
 - Director for Gulf Affairs: Stephanie Hallet
 - Director for the Arabian Peninsula: Evyenia Sidreas
 - Director for Iran: Sam Martin
 - Director for Iraq and Syria: Zehra Bell
 - Director for Israeli-Palestinian Affairs: Julie Sawyer
 - Director for Lebanon and Jordan: Maxwell Martin
 - Director for Political-Military Affairs and Yemen: K.C. Evans

- Congress:
 - United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee

on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism:

- Chair: Chris Murphy (D-CT)
- Ranking Member: Todd Young (R-IN)
- United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism:
 - Chair: David Cicilline (D-RI-01)
 - Ranking Member: Joe Wilson (R-SC)

Key Research Centers and Think Tanks

- American Enterprise Institute: <https://www.aei.org>
- Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington: <https://agsiw.org>
- Atlantic Council: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org>
- Brookings: <https://www.brookings.edu>
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: <https://carnegieendowment.org>
- Center for American Progress: <https://www.americanprogress.org>
- Center for Strategic and International Studies: <https://www.csis.org>
- Council on Foreign Relations: <https://www.cfr.org>
- Foreign Policy Research Institute: <https://www.fpri.org>
- Heritage Foundation: <https://www.heritage.org>
- Hudson Institute: <https://www.hudson.org>
- Middle East Institute: <https://www.mei.edu>
- Middle East Policy Council: <https://mepc.org>
- Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft: <https://quincyinst.org>
- RAND Corporation: <https://www.rand.org>
- Stimson Center: <https://www.stimson.org>
- The Century Foundation: <https://tcf.org>
- Wilson Center for International Scholars: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/>
- United States Institute of Peace: <https://www.usip.org/>
- Center for a New American Security (CNAS): <https://www.cnas.org/>
- Baker Institute for Public Policy: <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/>
- Congressional Research Service: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>

Selected Key Regional Experts

- [Karen Young](#) (Middle East Institute)
- [Hussein Ibish](#) (Arab Gulf Institute in Washington – AGSIW)
- [David des Roches](#) (National Defense University)
- [F. Gregory Gause, III](#) (Texas A&M University)
- [Frederic Wehrey](#) (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)
- [Anthony Cordesman](#) (Center for Strategic and International Studies – CSIS)
- [Kirsten Fontenrose](#) (The Atlantic Council)

Key Recent Literature

- [The Kingdom and the Power: How to Salvage the U.S.-Saudi Relationship – Foreign Affairs, January/February 2023](#)
- [US and Saudi Arabia Have Put Their Rift Behind Them - Bloomberg - December 2022](#)
- [Why the US-Saudi Crisis is So Bad and So Unnecessary - Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington - October 2022](#)
- [Biden’s Middle East Trip Achieved as Much as Possible - Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington - July 2022](#)
- [The New Old Middle Eastern Order: Biden’s Trip Shows Why Washington Is Still Getting the Region Wrong - Foreign Affairs – July 2022](#)
- [Middle East and North Africa: Implications of 2022 Russia-Ukraine War](#)



[- Congressional Research Service - June 2022](#)

- [The Case for a New US-Saudi Strategic Compact – Council on Foreign Relations – June 2022](#)
- [A Gradual Reset with Saudi Arabia - Middle East Institute - February 2022.](#)
- [When Less Is More: Rethinking US Military Strategy and Posture in the Middle East - CNAS - October 2021.](#)

4. Key Developments in US-GCC Relations


US-GCC

- In March 2023, the GCC announced that the member states sent a joint letter to the US condemning controversial comments made by Israel’s finance minister. Furthermore, the GCC called on the US “to assume its responsibilities in responding to all measures and statements that target the Palestinian people” and “to play its role in reaching a just, comprehensive and lasting solution” to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- In February 2023, a US delegation led by Special Envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, participated in meetings with the GCC in Riyadh to discuss Iranian threats to the region. The US-GCC meetings were focused on four areas of concern: air and missile defenses, maritime security, an Iran Working Group focused on Tehran-sponsored violence, and a Terrorism Working Group. Following the meeting, the two sides released a joint statement under the framework of the GCC-US Strategic Partnership.
- On November 28, 2022, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General H.E. Dr. Nayef al-Hajraf and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs Daniel Benaim discussed ways to boost cooperation within the framework of the existing US-GCC strategic partnership. The officials



reviewed topics of common interests, highlighted the growth and development in various fields, and efforts to enhance regional stability and security.

- Barbara A. Leaf, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, traveled to Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman from October 11 to October 24, 2022, to meet with senior government officials and non-governmental and civil society representatives.
- On July 16, 2022, President Biden met with leaders from the six GCC countries, plus Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq, at the Jeddah Security and Development Summit in Saudi Arabia. They discussed a wide range of topics, including preserving the region’s security and stability, resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution, achieving energy security, stabilizing energy markets, welcoming the truce in Yemen, and the ongoing issues in Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and Ukraine.
- In mid-April 2022, the GCC states and the US formed a new naval task force, the Combined Maritime Forces-153 (CMF-153), to improve maritime security in the Red Sea, Bab El-Mandeb, and the Gulf of Aden.
- The United States and the members of the GCC convened Working Groups



on Integrated Air and Missile Defense and Maritime Security at the GCC's headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 9, 2022.

US-Saudi Arabia

- In April 2023, Saudi Arabia, the US, the UAE, and Egypt started mediation efforts to end the ongoing conflict in Sudan.
- Also in April 2023, Jake Sullivan, US National Security Advisor, spoke to Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to discuss de-escalation in the region, the conflict in Yemen, and Iran's nuclear program. Sullivan welcomed Saudi Arabia's "extraordinary efforts to pursue a more comprehensive roadmap for ending the war and offered full US support for those efforts." Senator Lindsey Graham also met with the Crown Prince, reiterating the US commitment to enhancing US-Saudi ties.
- In April 2023, Bill Burns, director of the CIA, visited Saudi Arabia and met with officials to reinforce the US commitment to intelligence cooperation, especially in areas such as counterterrorism.
- Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan met with Brett McGurk, the US National Security Council coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, in mid-April 2023 to discuss further enhancing the US-Saudi relationship. They also exchanged views on international and regional developments.
- Following the signing of the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March 2023 to re-establish diplomatic ties, reopen embassies, and exchange ambassadors, the US expressed its cautious optimism despite China's involvement in brokering the deal.
- Saudi Arabia and the US completed their first joint counter-drone exercise in March 2023 at a military testing center in Riyadh

called the Red Sands.

- In mid-March 2023, the US welcomed the "landmark deals" between Saudi Arabia and Boeing. The deal, which is valued at \$37 billion, will see the Kingdom acquire up to 121 Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft equipped with General Electric engines. The deal itself supports more than 140,000 American jobs.
- In December 2022, the White House stated its intention to use a presidential veto on a bill banning US support for the Kingdom amidst the war in Yemen.
- On November 29, 2022, the US Department of State officially dedicated the new US Consulate General campus in Dhahran as an "important symbol" of US partnership with the Kingdom.

US-United Arab Emirates

- On February 28, 2023, the US and the UAE, alongside Qatar, Somalia, Turkiye, and the United Kingdom, issued a joint statement on Somalia. It discussed Somalia's security, state-building, development, and humanitarian priorities.
- In mid-February 2023, the UAE hosted the I2U2 meeting, which included the US, India, Israel, and the UAE. The meetings focused on economic development and food security amid global climate change.
- On February 14, 2023, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan met with Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken in Washington to discuss regional and international developments, including Palestine, the earthquakes in Turkiye and Syria, and the war in Ukraine.
- On February 6, 2023, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to discuss the conflict between Palestine and Israel.



- Between January 9-10, 2023, the US participated in the first Negev Forum Working Groups Meeting in Abu Dhabi. The Negev Forum seeks to enhance cooperation between countries and advance the interests of the region's people, including the Palestinians.
- Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry attended the Sir Bani Yas Forum on November 5, 2022, and discussed regional climate action and strategies to accelerate the energy transition.
- On November 1, 2022, the US and the UAE signed a new clean energy framework called the "Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy" (PACE) to enhance global climate action and accelerate the clean energy transition.
- In October 2022, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke with the UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The two reaffirmed the strong US-UAE relationship, discussing regional issues and enhancing cooperation.
- cooperation between the two countries.
- In late November 2022, the US State Department approved the sale of anti-drone systems to Qatar in a deal worth \$1 billion. The State Department said the sale would support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the US "by helping to improve the security of a friendly country that continues to be an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East."
- On November 23, 2022, Qatar and the US signed a Letter of Intent on bilateral cooperation. This comes against Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken's visit to Qatar for the World Cup.
- On November 20, 2022, the US Department of State released a fact sheet on "The United States and Qatar: Strategic Partners Advancing Peace and Security" before the fifth session of the US-Qatar Strategic Dialogue. The dialogue addressed several issues of mutual interest, including regional stability, defense cooperation, public health, counterterrorism, combating human trafficking, human rights, climate change, energy efficiency, humanitarian assistance, strategic investments, economic cooperation, and cultural and educational exchanges.

US-Qatar

- In April 2023, the US welcomed the deal between Qatar and Bahrain to resume diplomatic ties. Both countries are close US partners in the Middle East, with Bahrain hosting the US Navy's 5th Fleet.
- On February 28, 2023, the US and Qatar, alongside the UAE, Somalia, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom, issued a joint statement on Somalia. It discussed Somalia's security, state-building, development, and humanitarian priorities.
- In November 2022, Qatar hosted the fifth Qatar-US Strategic Dialogue. H.E. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed current political issues and ways to strengthen

US-Oman

- In November 2022, Oman and the US issued a joint statement following the US-Oman Strategic Dialogue. The two sides reaffirmed their growing partnership on regional security.
- The United States and the Sultanate of Oman held the US-Oman Joint Military Commission (JMC) at the Pentagon on March 23-24, 2022.

US-Bahrain

- In April 2023, the US welcomed the deal between Qatar and Bahrain to resume diplomatic ties. Both countries are close US partners in the Middle East, with Qatar being home to the largest US air base in the region.
- On February 23, 2023, the US and Bahrain established a working group to operationalize unmanned systems.
- On January 15, 2023, military personnel from the US and Bahrain participated in a 10-day naval exercise. The exercise focused on maritime operations, installation defense, expeditionary operations, tactical combat, medical response, and search and rescue training.
- Between January 9-10, 2023, Bahrain participated in the first Negev Forum Working Groups Meeting in Abu Dhabi alongside the US. The Negev Forum seeks to enhance cooperation between countries and advance the interests of the region's people, including the Palestinian people.
- On August 18, 2022, the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) hosted the Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) officer course at Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

US-Kuwait

- In February 2023, the US approved the possible sale of military systems to Kuwait for an estimated cost of \$250 million.
- On December 11, 2022, Kuwait, the US, and Iraq completed the 2nd Joint Patrol in the Arabian Gulf to promote regional maritime security.
- In October 2022, the US State Department approved the sale of a \$3 billion deal for National Advanced Surface-To-Air Missile System (NASAMS) and Medium Range Air Defense Systems (MRADS) to Kuwait to help the country defend itself “against regional malign actors and improve interoperability with systems

operated by US forces and other Gulf countries.”

- In late August 2022, Kuwait, Iraq, and the US conducted joint drills in the Arabian Gulf to help bolster naval cooperation between the three forces.
- In August 2022, Michele Sison, the US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, met with Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Foreign Minister, in Kuwait to discuss enhancing global food security and cooperation in the health sector.

Overall, a significant level of skepticism remains among GCC member states regarding US policy in the region. The Jeddah Security and Development Summit can be seen as a positive shift in US-GCC relations with President Biden stating that the US would “remain an active, engaged partner in the Middle East” and “will not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia, or Iran.” He added that the interests of the US are “closely interwoven” with the successes of the Gulf region. Addressing the leaders of the GCC countries, President Biden stated that “the United States is invested in building a positive future in the region, in partnership with all of you, and the United States is not going anywhere. Moreover, President Biden outlined a “new framework for the Middle East,” including economic development, military and security, and regional stability. Overall, military ties between the US and the GCC continue as demonstrated by military sales to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE and joint military cooperation with Qatar and Bahrain.





On October 12, 2022, the Biden-Harris administration announced the US National Security Strategy, outlining a new framework for US policy in the Middle East. This framework reiterates US policy in not allowing Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, combatting terrorism in Yemen, Syria, and Libya, and supporting a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine crisis. It rests on five principles:

First, the United States will support and strengthen partnerships with countries that subscribe to the rules-based international order, and we will make sure those countries can defend themselves against foreign threats. Second, the United States will not allow foreign or regional powers to jeopardize freedom of navigation through the Middle East's waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al Mandab, nor tolerate efforts by any country to dominate another—or the region—through military buildups, incursions, or threats. Third, even as the United States works to deter threats to regional stability, we will work to reduce tensions, de-escalate, and end conflicts wherever possible through diplomacy. Fourth, the United States will promote regional integration by building political, economic, and security connections between and among US partners, including through integrated air and maritime defense structures, while respecting each country's sovereignty and independent choices. Fifth, the United States will always promote human rights and the values enshrined in the UN Charter.

While many aspects of relations between the US and the GCC have remained unchanged, the GCC states have begun reaching out to other countries in order to strengthen ties and avoid falling into a security vacuum should the US shift its deep security commitment to the region in pursuit of other interests. On numerous issues, the GCC and the US are not necessarily aligned, as highlighted by different positions concerning the Russia-Ukraine crisis, with, for example, the UAE initially abstaining from two UN Security Council resolutions, and Saudi Arabia and the UAE sticking to their energy output commitment within the OPEC+ framework, which includes Russia. Notably, the OPEC+ decision to cut oil production to 2 million barrels per day stirred a negative reaction in the US with the White House releasing a statement that “the President is disappointed by the shortsighted decision by OPEC+ to cut production quotas while the global economy is dealing with the continued negative impact of Putin's invasion of Ukraine.” Saudi Arabia and the UAE rejected the accusations that they are taking sides in international conflicts, or the OPEC+ decision was politically motivated against the US.

China has also been playing a more prominent role in the region, specifically on the economic front. Despite US suggestions that broadening ties with China could affect US-GCC relations, the Gulf region has continued to build its relations with China. This is particularly evident following President Xi's visit to Saudi Arabia for the China-Arab Summit and China's role in brokering the Saudi-Iran deal in restoring diplomatic relations. What such developments indicate is that while US-GCC ties remain robust, new dynamics are taking hold in terms of the region's ties to the United States.

The Gulf region has also been keen on playing a more decisive mediating role. This can be seen in light of the Sudan crisis as Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined the US in mediation efforts to end the conflict. Saudi Arabia has been leading

the evacuation processes of its nationals and other citizens out of Sudan, as well as hosting negotiations and peace talks between the conflicting parties. The Gulf countries also delivered substantial humanitarian aid to Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquakes in 2023, as well as delivering assistance to Ukraine throughout the war there.

5. Supporting Documents

GRC publications and GRM workshops

- GRC Publication 2021: Changes in United States Foreign Policy Shifts Towards the Middle East: Strategies - Approaches - Evidences - Forecasts (Dr. Amara Alrashed Alghamdi).
- GRC Publication 2019: The Arab Gulf States and the West. Perception and Realities - Opportunities and Perils (Edited by: Dania Koleilat Khatib and Marwa Maziad)
 - GRM Workshop 2017: The Arab Gulf in the West: Perceptions and Realities; Opportunities and Perils.
- GRC Publication 2015: The United States and the Gulf: Shifting Pressures, Strategies and Alignments (Edited by: Steven W. Hook and Tim Niblock).

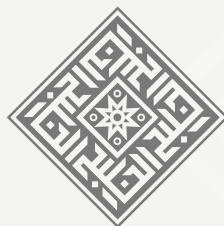
Araa Magazine

- [Issue 176](#): Enhancing US-Gulf Relations and the Results of the Jeddah Security and Development Summit - August 2022.
- [Issue 167](#): The AUKUS Agreement and Its Impact on Global Alliances and the Gulf Region - October 2021.
- [Issue 159](#): The Features of Biden's Policy Towards the Middle East and the Gulf Region - February 2021.
- [Issue 153](#): US-Chinese Relations and Its Impact on the Arab Region - September 2020.
- [Issue 148](#): US-Saudi Relations Over 75 Years - April 2020.

- [Issue 132](#): The US Withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal: Implications and Scenarios - August 2018.

GRC recent interviews on the issues related to the US:

- November 30, 2022: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in an interview by the Independent (Turkey) and discussed Saudi-US relations.
- November 2-3, 2022: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager spoke at the 31st annual Arab-US Policymakers Conference hosted by the National Council on US-Arab Relations in the panel titled 'Geopolitical Dynamics of Arabia and the Gulf.'
- October 17, 2022: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the 'Panorama' program on Al-Arabiya on an episode entitled 'Saudi - US Relations Escalating Statements.'
- July 15, 2022: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, discussed with "Asharq Bloomberg" the implications of the visit of President Biden to the Middle East in a program entitled: "Biden's visit to the Middle East... What do Arabs want from America?"
- October 13, 2021: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the private round table discussion: "Beyond Yemen's Borders," co-organized by the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen (OSEGY), the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, and King's College London, Department of Geography, and Institute for Middle Eastern Studies.
- June 1, 2021: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager spoke in the "Geopolitical Setting – Changes with the Biden Administration" session organized by the Bush School of Government & Public Service, Texas A&M University.



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