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| **LD January-February 2024 Topic Brief** |

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| **Topic** |

Topic Overview

Resolved: The United States ought to substantially reduce its military presence in the West Asia-North Africa region.

The United States’ military presence in the West Asia-North Africa region remains relatively large following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7. There has been a large domino effect from the Israel-Palestine conflict in the Middle Eastern/West Asian/North African Region. This possibility for arguments changes every single day, following each development that comes as a result of Israel and Palestine’s relentless conflict.

The United States’ military has been present in this region for far longer than the Israel-Palestine conflict. In fact, the US military has been stationed in this region, and the Middle East, for years. United States forces have been pulled out of the Middle East, almost completely in the last 7 years.

Too add, tensions between The United States and China have increased substantially in the twenty-first century. Following increased tension, the United States has increased its military presence in Asia as a whole, and specifically, West Asia.

Additional Reading

<https://new.thecradle.co/articles-id/7011>

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/u-s-security-policy-in-asia-implications-for-china-u-s-relations/>

<https://www.unep.org/regions/west-asia/regional-initiatives/building-resilience-disasters-and-conflicts>

<https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2020/06>

<https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/peace-in-west-asia/>

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/16/north-africa-tension-as-new-normal-pub-83325>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-troops-in-middle-east-what-are-they-doing-and-where-/7469452.html>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-military-assets-in-middle-east/>

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| **Affirmative Case** |

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Definitions

United States

**Cornell Law**

Cornell Law. “Definition: United States from 21 USC § 387(22) | LII / Legal Information Institute.” *Legal Information Institute*, www.law.cornell.edu/definitions/uscode.php?width=840&height=800&iframe=true&def\_id=21-USC-2032517217-1803904159&term\_occur=8&term\_src=. Accessed 23 Jan. 2024. -WR

**“The term “United States” means the 50 States of the United States of America and the District of Columbia**, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Wake Island, Midway Islands, Kingman Reef, Johnston Atoll, the Northern Mariana Islands, and any other trust territory or possession of the United States.”

Ought

**Merriam Webster Dictionary**

“Ought Definition & Meaning.” *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought. -WR

**“used to express moral obligation”**

Substantial reduction

**Law Insider Dictionary**

“Substantial Reduction Definition.” *Law Insider*, www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/substantial-reduction. -WR

“**a reduction of 25 percent or more in the total dollar value of funds obligated by the contract.**”

Military

**Collins Dictionary**

*Military Presence Definition in American English | Collins English ...*, www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/military-presence. -WR

**“Military means relating to the armed forces of a country.”**

Presence

**Collins Dictionary**

*Military Presence Definition in American English | Collins English ...*, www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/military-presence. -WR

**“Someone's presence in a place is the fact that they are there.”**

West Asia

**United Nations Environmental Program**

United Nations. “West Asia.” *Ozonaction*, UN Environment Programme, www.unep.org/ozonaction/networks/west-asia. -WR

“The West Asia Regional Ozone Officers Network was approved in 1997 to enhance, strengthen and catalyze efforts of member countries to achieve and sustain their compliance with the Montreal Protocol and its amendments targeting the phase-out of the Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) in a timely manner with minimum negative impacts on economic and social aspects. **The West Asia region comprises the following member countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, State of Palestine (observer), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.”**

North Africa

**Encyclopedia Britannica**

“North Africa.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 Jan. 2024, www.britannica.com/place/North-Africa. -WR

**“North Africa, region of Africa comprising the modern countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. The geographic entity North Africa has no single accepted definition.** It has been regarded by some as stretching from the Atlantic shores of Morocco in the west to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea in the east, though this designation is more commonly referred to as northern Africa.”

Value-Criterion

**Value: Human Dignity**

**Schachter 83** Published by American Journal of International Law, Vol. 77(4), pp. 848-854. Published October 1983. Available here: (https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/F5C2D6F4C7A31D7DE2F6AD55670C24D4/S0002930000071074a.pdf/human\_dignity\_as\_a\_normative\_concept.pdf) - AP

**“The conception of respect for dignity suggested above can also be given more specific meaning by applying it to actions of psychological significance. Indeed, nothing is so clearly violative of the dignity of persons as treatment that demeans or humiliates them.** This includes not only attacks on personal beliefs and ways of life but also attacks on the groups and communities with which individuals are affiliated. **Official statements that vilify groups or hold them up to ridicule and contempt are an especially dangerous form of psychological aggression resulting in a lack of respect by others for such groups and, perhaps even more insidious, destroying or reducing the sense of self respect that is so important to the integrity of every human.** We can also point to the widespread practice of using psychogenic drugs or other forms of psychological coercion to impose conformity and ideological obedience, These should clearly be seen as violations of the inherent dignity of the person. Put in positive terms, **respect for the intrinsic worth of a person requires a recognition that the person is entitled to have his or her beliefs, attitudes, ideas and feelings. The use of coercion, physical or psychological, to change personal beliefs is as striking an affront to the dignity of the person as physical abuse or mental torture. Our emphasis on respect for individuals and their choices also implies proper regard for the responsibility of individuals. The idea that people are generally responsible for their conduct is a recognition of their distinct identity and their capacity to make choices.** Exceptions may have to be made for those incapable of such choices (minors or the insane) or in some cases for those under severe necessity. But the general recognition of individual responsibility, whether expressed in matters of criminal justice or civic duties, is an aspect of the respect that each person merits as a person. It is also worth noting as a counterpart that restraint is called for in imputing responsibility to individuals for acts of others such as groups of which they are members. **In general, collective responsibility is a denigration of the dignity of the individual, a denial of a person's capacity to choose and act on his or her responsibility.** We do not by this last comment mean to separate individuals sharply from the collectivities of which they are a part. Indeed, we believe that the idea of 1983] EDITORIAL COMMENT 851 human dignity involves a complex notion of the individual. **It includes recognition of a distinct personal identity, reflecting individual autonomy and responsibility.** It also embraces a recognition that the individual self is a part of larger collectivities and that they, too, must be considered in the meaning of the inherent dignity of the person. We can readily see the practical import of this conception of personality by considering political orders that, on the one hand, arbitrarily override individual choice and, on the other, seek to dissolve group ties. There is also a "procedural" implication in that it indicates that every individual and each significant group should be recognized as having the capacity to assert claims to protect their essential dignity.”

**Criterion: Consequentialism**

**Sinnott-Armstrong 19**

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "Consequentialism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/consequentialism -CD

“Consequentialism, as its name suggests, is simply the view that **normative properties depend only on consequences.** This historically important and still popular theory embodies the basic intuition that **what is best or right is whatever makes the world best in the future**, because we cannot change the past, so worrying about the past is no more useful than crying over spilled milk. This general approach can be applied at different levels to different normative properties of different kinds of things, but the most prominent example is probably **consequentialism about the moral rightness of acts,** which **holds that whether an act is morally right depends only on the consequences of that act** or of something related to that act, such as the motive behind the act or a general rule requiring acts of the same kind.”

United States military presence in the West Asia, North Africa region is fundamentally antithetical to human dignity for the citizens of those regions as a result of the consequences (explored in contentions)

Contention 1 - Regional conflicts in Gaza

Israel and Palestine

United States is funding Israel

**Aftandilian 2023**

AFTANDILIAN, GREGORY. “US Military Presence in the Middle East: Deterrence and Retaliation.” *Arab Center Washington DC*, 14 Nov. 2023, arabcenterdc.org/resource/us-military-presence-in-the-middle-east-deterrence-and-retaliation/. -WR

**“In the immediate aftermath of the Hamas attack on Israel** on October 7, the Biden administration pursued a two-track policy. **The first** was a **full embrace of Israel that involved replenishing its military stocks (with promises of $14 billion in additional military aid), and** the second was **sending US naval and air assets to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea to deter Hezbollah from joining the war.** US strategic planners undoubtedly remember the events of 2006 when Israel and Hezbollah fought a 34-day war in which Israel bombed infrastructure targets as far north as Beirut, causing much destruction. The US fears that a two-front war for Israel this time around would not only widen the conflict but would bring further destabilization to Lebanon, a country already mired in economic and political woes, as well as to the region as a whole.”

United States funding is fueling the conflict

**Paul 2023** Paul, Josh. “I Knew U.S. Military Aid Would Kill Civilians and Undermine Israeli Security. so I Quit.” *The New York Times*, 17 Nov. 2023, www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/opinion/us-military-aid-war-israel.html. Accessed 04 Feb. 2024. -WR

“On Oct. 18, I resigned from the State Department because I could not support the provision of U.S. weapons into the conflict in Gaza, where I knew that they would be used to kill thousands of civilians. I saw no willingness to re-evaluate a long-term policy that has not led to peace and has actually undermined both regional stability and Israeli security. How can military assistance to Israel undermine Israeli security? This is a question I grappled with for many years in the State Department’s political-military affairs bureau and in a previous role as an adviser for the U.S. security coordinator, in which I worked across the West Bank. In that role, I commuted frequently between Ramallah and Jerusalem to advance the road map for peace that the George W. Bush administration truly believed would finally lead to a two-state solution. The United States currently provides Israel with at least $3.8 billion in annual military assistance, the most to any country per year, with the recent exception of Ukraine. High levels of assistance date back roughly to the 1970s and reflect a longstanding American bargain with Israel of security for peace — the notion that the more secure Israel feels, the more concessions it will be able to make to the Palestinians. Since the mid-1990s, the United States has also been a major sponsor of the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority Security Forces, providing training and equipment on the theory that as the Palestinians stand up, the Israelis can stand down. In both cases, the rationale for U.S. security assistance is fatally flawed. On the Israeli side, blind U.S. security guarantees have not provided a path to peace. Instead, they have provided Israel with the reassurance that it can engage in increasingly destructive efforts, such as the expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank, without any real consequences. At the same time, Israel has become a global leader in weapons exports and boasts one of the most technologically sophisticated militaries in the world. All of these factors have created a sense among Israeli policymakers that they can indefinitely contain — physically and politically — the Palestinian question. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the recent efforts, driven by the United States, first under the Trump administration and continuing under President Biden, to pursue normalization between Israel and the Arab world. While in many ways this normalization is long overdue, it has been premised on the notion that economic incentives — and a shared regional security interest in deterring malign Iranian influence — can integrate Israel, indefinite occupation and all, into the Arab world. This premise has been shattered — likely intentionally on Hamas’s part — by the Gaza conflict and its rapid recentering of the Palestinian cause on a global stage. As much as the United States, Israel and Arab leaders such as Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler, Mohammed bin Salman, would like to frame security in pragmatic, nation-to-nation terms, Arab populations still care deeply about the fate of the Palestinians. As civilian deaths in Gaza and the West Bank continue to mount, it is clear any sort of Saudi normalization agreement with Israel that does not also include substantive progress on a political solution for the Palestinian cause will be difficult to advance. U.S. military assistance to Israel in recent years has not only disregarded the regional policy context but also the framework the United States relies on to consider human rights concerns everywhere else it provides such assistance. Under the Leahy laws, the United States is prohibited from providing security assistance to any unit that is credibly accused of having committed a gross violation of human rights. Unlike almost all other recipients, which are vetted along these lines before they receive assistance, for Israel the process is reversed: The assistance is provided, and the United States then waits to receive reports of violations, assessing their credibility through a process known as the Israel Leahy vetting forum, which includes consultation with the government of Israel. To date, the forum has never come to consensus that any Israeli security force unit or soldier has committed a gross violation of human rights — despite the findings of international human rights organizations that indicate otherwise. This runs contrary to U.S. values (and arguably laws); additionally, the U.S. failure to impose accountability on Israel for such violations may provide Israel with a sense of impunity, increasing the likelihood of gross violations of human rights (including those committed by settlers against Palestinian civilians) and further breaking the trust between Israel and Palestinians that would be needed for any sort of lasting peace. Meanwhile, U.S.-led efforts to bolster the Palestinian Authority through its security forces have likewise led nowhere, despite the best of intent. This project, an outgrowth of the 1998 Wye River memorandum and the 2003 road map for peace, was intended to allow Israel a security partner that it could have confidence in. In more recent years, the effort has focused solely on the Palestinian Authority. Working on the ground with the authority, I saw how the major focus of U.S. efforts was to prove to the Israel Defense Forces that their Palestinian counterparts could be trusted to take on the mission of securing Israel. Palestinian intelligence officials would be provided with target information by Israel, and Palestinian forces would be expected to take on missions previously conducted by the Israel Defense Forces to detain those targets. This effort not only undermined Palestinian support for the authority but also failed to convince the Israelis, who saw any Palestinian courts’ (correct) refusal to hold Palestinian detainees without due process as proof of a revolving door in the system. Even worse, in 2008 and ’09, when Israel’s Operation Cast Lead, which resulted in over 1,300 Palestinian deaths in Gaza, sparked protests in the West Bank, it was the Palestinian Authority Security Forces that physically stood between demonstrators and the Israel Defense Forces. From my balcony in Ramallah, I saw this as a proof of success and reported as much to Washington at the time. In hindsight, it was perhaps the death knell for the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of its people. Regardless, it still does not seem that the authority has earned Israel’s trust; last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unequivocally ruled out the idea of allowing the authority to control Gaza after the war. If the United States is to continue to employ military and security assistance as a tool of its engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (and there are good arguments why it should not), it must change its approach significantly. One way to do this would be simply by applying the laws and policies that it applies to every other country in the world: There is no point in having leverage that could pressure Israel to cease actions that undermine peace if we refuse to even consider using it. The United States could also start conditioning its military assistance to Israel (as it does for many other recipients) on certain verifiable political conditions being met. In Israel’s case, these may include a halt to or dismantling of settlement infrastructure in the West Bank. Another thing the U.S. might do is consider reframing its security assistance on the Palestinian side to reinforce, rather than undermine, the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority — a task even more vital and even more difficult in the current context, in which the authority is seen as complicit with the occupation, and Hamas is increasingly seen as the standard-bearer of Palestinian resistance. Doing so would require structuring assistance in a way that enables Palestinian society control over its own security forces. It would also require the recognition of Palestinian statehood. But all this could be fully achieved only with the agreement of the Israelis or at least a willingness on their part to decenter their security demands, which would be unlikely without the United States leveraging its military assistance to Israel. **I resigned from my job because I do not believe that U.S. arms should be provided in a situation if we know they are more likely than not — in the words of the Biden administration’s own guiding policy — to lead to or to aggravate the risk of human rights violations, including widespread civilian harm and death. That is most acutely the case in terms of the munitions — many of them American — currently raining down on the Gaza Strip. But it is also the case more broadly and will remain so for as long as the U.S. pursues an approach to Israel that is blind to the consequences of that assistance, which enables continuing violations of Palestinian rights across Gaza and the West Bank and in the long term does nothing to provide Israel with the lasting security and peace that all civilians deserve.”**

Contention 2 - U.S. Humanitarian Help

The United States provides $800 million in Humanitarian Aid in Syria

**US Aid for the American People 2022**“The United States Provides Nearly $808 Million in Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Syria: Press Release.” *U.S. Agency for International Development*, Office of Press Regulations, 10 May 2022, www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/may-10-2022-united-states-provides-nearly-808-million-emergency-humanitarian. -WR

“Today, **U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield announced the United States is providing nearly $808 million in additional humanitarian assistance for the Syria crisis** response at the sixth Brussels Conference on “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region,” hosted by the European Union. **This new funding includes nearly $446 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** and is the largest USAID funding contribution for Syria this year. **The additional funding announced today will enable USAID partners to provide emergency food, nutrition, health, protection support, shelter, multipurpose cash, agriculture support for farmers, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assistance, to include early recovery activities, for more than 5.8 million people in Syria and refugees in surrounding host countries.** This latest USAID contribution will support the UN World Food Program in providing monthly food assistance to those in Syria, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt. **This funding also supports protection activities – including safe spaces for women and girls and psychosocial support – for conflict-affected communities, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance to Syrians in northwest Syria.** With Syria’s health system decimated by 11 years of active conflict, today’s funding will help sustain health facilities across northern Syria, immunize high-risk children against preventable diseases, and provide preventative and curative nutrition services to pregnant and nursing women and children under five. This newly announced assistance comes at a critical time, as more than 12 million Syrians do not have enough to eat, nearly 14 million have been displaced, basic services are destroyed, civilians continue to be killed by airstrikes and artillery, and some 14.6 million people require humanitarian aid — more than at any time since the start of the war. **These growing needs make the United Nations’ upcoming July reauthorization of the cross-border mandate – allowing aid to be delivered directly to people in northwest Syria – essential for the millions of Syrians who rely on this aid to survive.** The United States is continuing to engage with United Nations Security Council members to maintain access through the UN-approved border crossing into Syria and pushing for additional access points for UN humanitarian assistance. **It is imperative to keep humanitarian aid flowing for millions in one of the largest and most complex humanitarian crises. The United States remains the single largest humanitarian donor to the Syria response and has provided nearly $15 billion in humanitarian assistance throughout Syria and the region since the start of the eleven-year conflict, including support for the COVID-19 pandemic response for Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.** USAID assistance alone is reaching more than 5.5 million people per month inside Syria. The United States encourages other donors to support the Syrian people given the scale and urgency of needs.”

Military conflict is antithetical to humanitarian efforts

**Global Humanitarian Overview 2022** Clark, Giles. “Middle East and North Africa.” *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022*, 2022, 2022.gho.unocha.org/appeals/middle-east-and-north-africa/. -WR

**“Years of conflict continue to cause crippling humanitarian consequences in the Middle East and North Africa region.** Vulnerable people’s ability to cope and meet their basic needs is hampered by the effects of COVID-19, macroeconomic decline and the climate crisis. Over 55 million people across the region need humanitarian assistance, including more than 12 million people who are internally displaced and facing a myriad of challenges. **Hostilities are devastating communities, increasing protection risks and concerns in oPt, Syria and Yemen, and exacerbating civilian suffering, deaths and injuries. Children and people in need are in extreme danger from daily indiscriminate attacks on schools and hospitals, preventing meaningful access to services.** Many displaced people in Iraq, Libya, oPt, Syria and Yemen live in poor conditions in camps and settlements, with limited access to basic services and the potential risk of eviction. The effects of conflict are compounded by recurring climatic shocks and extreme weather conditions, including floods and extended dry conditions. The frequency and magnitude of these shocks increases year on year. In Syria, erratic rainfall and tensions over water resource management have resulted in low water levels in the Euphrates River, affecting up to 5 million people. Floods in Yemen have displaced 34,000 families and spread preventable waterborne diseases, such as cholera. The socioeconomic impacts and containment measures associated with the pandemic have increased pre-existing vulnerabilities and stretched already weakened health-care systems. Vaccination rates remain low and vaccines difficult to access. Across the region, many countries are battling economic collapse, including soaring food and fuel prices, currency depreciation, limited household revenue and rising unemployment. Families cannot afford basic goods and services including food, health care, education and water. Food insecurity and nutrition have continued to worsen, with millions of people in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen on the brink of hunger and resorting to negative coping mechanisms. Famine-like conditions are evident in parts of these countries.”

Decreasing military presence increases humanitarian aid.

Additional Arguments/Evidence

Iran-Proxy forces attacking US military, US military forces are in danger

**Aftandilian 2023**AFTANDILIAN, GREGORY. “US Military Presence in the Middle East: Deterrence and Retaliation.” *Arab Center Washington DC*, 14 Nov. 2023, arabcenterdc.org/resource/us-military-presence-in-the-middle-east-deterrence-and-retaliation/. -WR

“While deterrence may help deter Hezbollah in Lebanon, the same cannot be said for the **pro-Iran proxy forces in Syria and Iraq that have undertaken more than 45 attacks against US personnel and bases in these countries since October 17.** So far, these attacks (usually by rockets or drones) on US targets have not led to any US combat deaths, though one US contractor apparently died of a heart attack during one such episode, and there have been some minor injuries to US service members.”

US Forces in the Middle East have not helped

**Manning 2021** Manning, Robert, and Christopher Preble. “Reality Check #8: Rethinking US Military Policy in the Greater Middle East.” *Atlantic Council*, 24 June 2021, www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/reality-check/reality-check-8-rethinking-us-military-policy-in-the-greater-middle-east/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“Decades of costly and inconclusive US wars in the Greater Middle East have produced neither peace nor stability. The region remains one of the poorest and most conflict-prone in the world.** Radical geopolitical and economic change in the Greater Middle East and new US strategic priorities with regard to core US interests—ensuring oil flows, maintaining Israel's security, preventing the rise of a dominant regional hegemon, and countering terrorism—require a zero-based rethinking of US strategy and posture in the region. **The United States should reduce its network of air and naval bases in the Greater Middle East and design a much smaller footprint tailored to redefined requirements.** An emphasis on access agreements, combined with robust diplomacy, would allow Washington to foster a stable equilibrium in the region.”

U.S. forces are in the region to aid Israel

**Vergun 2023** Vergun, David. “U.S. Has 4 Objectives in Middle East.” *U.S. Department of Defense*, US DOD, 6 Nov. 2023, www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3581319/us-has-4-objectives-in-middle-east/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

“The Defense Department currently has four lines of effort in the Middle East, said Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, who briefed the media today. **1) Protection of U.S. forces and citizens in the region. 2) Flow of critical security assistance to Israel as it defends against further Hamas terrorist attacks. 3) Coordination with the Israelis to help secure the release of hostages held by Hamas, to include American citizens. 4) Strengthening of force posture across the region to deter any state or nonstate actors from escalating the crisis beyond Gaza.** Strengthened force posture includes the deployment of the USS Gerald R. Ford and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Groups, which are currently in the U.S. Central Command area, along with an Ohio-class submarine. Over the past few weeks there have been attacks by Iranian proxy groups at al-Asad air base, Iraq, and al-Tanf, Syria, on U.S. forces there, Ryder said. The attacks, by drones and missiles, resulted in several dozen injuries, including a mix of minor injuries and traumatic brain injuries, he said. Some of those injured didn't immediately report their condition, he said. "The reporting data is highly dependent on self-reporting when individual injuries are not visually evident to medical personnel providing care directly following an incident," he said.”

US Efforts in the region have failed, and will fail

**Hoffman 2024** Hoffman, Jon. “U.S. Middle East Policy Has Failed.” *Foreign Policy*, 11 Jan. 2024, foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/11/israel-hamas-gaza-war-us-middle-east-policy-saudi-biden/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“Amid this turmoil, Washington continues to reach for its old playbook: throwing money, weapons, and military assets at the region.** The Biden administration remains adamant that pursuing an Israel-Saudi normalization deal centered on U.S. security guarantees to both countries is the key to achieving lasting peace and prosperity in the Middle East. On Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken even visited Saudi Arabia, where he spoke of Riyadh’s continued interest in striking such a deal. **This approach is bound to backfire. Washington should face reality: U.S. Middle East policy has failed. At the heart of this failure are the United States’ main regional partnerships.** The two crucial U.S. partners in the region, Israel and Saudi Arabia, are liabilities to the United States, not assets. Although the two states maintain considerable political, economic, and social differences, they both consistently undermine U.S. interests and the values that the United States claims to stand for. Washington should fundamentally reorient its approach to both countries, moving from unconditional support to arm’s-length relationships.”

Threat of isolation with Iraq and Iran

**Cordesman 2020** Cordesman, Anthony H. “America’s Failed Strategy in the Middle East: Losing Iraq and the Gulf.” *CSIS*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2 Jan. 2020, www.csis.org/analysis/americas-failed-strategy-middle-east-losing-iraq-and-gulf. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024.-WR

“The central government’s Army and Air Force remained largely separate from the Kurdish forces in the north. Efforts to integrate the various Shi’ite and Sunni PMFs – that had helped fight ISIS – into the central government’s forces resulted in an unworkable system where these deeply divided forces – many with close ties to Iran – reported directly to a Prime Minister with no real authority who had lost his popular mandate. **The United States faces an all too real risk that events in Iraq will trigger a much more serious clash between the United States and Iran in Iraq – as well as Iran in the rest of the region – not to mention that the United States will face major Iraqi hostility over its use of force in Iraq despite opposition from the Iraqi government.** The United States has again slashed its official presence in Iraq, and the U.S. Ambassador has warned U.S. citizens to leave the country. At the same time, Iraq has no clear path towards unity, the creation of either a workable political system or an effective government, or the prospects of economic recovery. Coping with a new crisis of each given day often seems beyond America’s reach.”

Demilitarizing US policy is best for solving regional conflict

**Hill 2021** Hill, Thomas. “A New Strategy for US Engagement in North Africa: A Report of the North Africa Working Group.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, United States Institute for Peace, Feb. 2021, carnegieendowment.org/2021/02/23/new-strategy-for-u.s.-engagement-in-north-africa-report-of-north-africa-working-group-pub-83926. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“US national security interests would be best served by a new regional strategy that aligns current military and foreign assistance investments, demilitarized US policy in the region while prioritizing efforts that are better aligned with the demands of the region’s people,** prevents conflict between allies, and challenges Russian and Chinese expansion, while working in close step with our European allies and partners, who have crucial economic and historical ties to the region.

US is unlikely to increase non-humanitarian aid

**Hill 2021** Hill, Thomas. “A New Strategy for US Engagement in North Africa: A Report of the North Africa Working Group.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, United States Institute for Peace, Feb. 2021, carnegieendowment.org/2021/02/23/new-strategy-for-u.s.-engagement-in-north-africa-report-of-north-africa-working-group-pub-83926. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“The significant economic impact of COVID-19 means that the Biden administration is unlikely to increase foreign assistance spending, especially for nonhumanitarian and global health initiatives.** In addition to new financial constraints, US policymakers will continue to divide their attention between competing global priorities and a growing bipartisan desire to reduce US military engagements in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.”

US should respond non-militarily

**Hill 2021** Hill, Thomas. “A New Strategy for US Engagement in North Africa: A Report of the North Africa Working Group.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, United States Institute for Peace, Feb. 2021, carnegieendowment.org/2021/02/23/new-strategy-for-u.s.-engagement-in-north-africa-report-of-north-africa-working-group-pub-83926. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“A new US strategy for North Africa should be premised on advancing US interests via multilateral institutions, exercising diplomatic leadership and support for burden sharing.** This starts with closer coordination with Europe to augment current levels of direct US investment in the region in the guise of both foreign assistance and diplomatic engagement. **By partnering with Europe** and stretching our dollars via multilateral approaches, **the United States can advance its own interests in the region in an extremely difficult financial landscape.**”

US Politics - US public wants troops removed from the region

**Walldorf 2024** Walldorf, William. “Why the American Public Is More War-Weary than Ever.” *Time*, Time Magazine, 31 Jan. 2024, time.com/6590408/us-biden-middle-east-war/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“Opposition to Biden’s approach on Gaza will only expand with a wider war. Young voters strongly oppose Biden’s unwavering support for Israel’s disproportionate use of force in Gaza**, which has killed at least 26,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children. Progressive Democrats are balking too. A new U.S. war today will create deep revulsion from these quarters. Revulsion will also come from Republicans, too. The powerful nationalist wing of the GOP is uncomfortable with war today. Donald Trump complained recently about too much bombing in the Middle East and some MAGA leaders want brakes on or oppose military action. **This should all give U.S. decision-makers pause. As research shows, pursuing unpopular wars can create a lot of public resistance to wars that are in the national interest. Direct U.S. involvement in a Middle East war today would be terrible at a time when Washington needs to remain nimble and engaged to manage major challenges in Asia and Europe.”**

Defensive strategies are effective

**Walldorf 2024** Walldorf, William. “Why the American Public Is More War-Weary than Ever.” *Time*, Time Magazine, 31 Jan. 2024, time.com/6590408/us-biden-middle-east-war/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

“Biden needs to bring the temperature down. He should rule out any strikes inside Iran, which denies involvement in Sunday’s attack. **He should also reconsider further airstrikes against the Iran-backed Yemen’s Houthis and return to the defensive posture of intercepting incoming attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea. This strategy was working effectively—no deaths or major damage—before the U.S. strikes in Yemen and can work going forward.”**

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| **Negative Case** |

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Definitions

United States

**Cornell Law**

Cornell Law. “Definition: United States from 21 USC § 387(22) | LII / Legal Information Institute.” *Legal Information Institute*, www.law.cornell.edu/definitions/uscode.php?width=840&height=800&iframe=true&def\_id=21-USC-2032517217-1803904159&term\_occur=8&term\_src=. Accessed 23 Jan. 2024. -WR

**“The term “United States” means the 50 States of the United States of America and the District of Columbia**, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Wake Island, Midway Islands, Kingman Reef, Johnston Atoll, the Northern Mariana Islands, and any other trust territory or possession of the United States.”

Ought

**Merriam Webster Dictionary**

“Ought Definition & Meaning.” *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought. -WR

**“used to express moral obligation”**

Substantial reduction

**Law Insider Dictionary**

“Substantial Reduction Definition.” *Law Insider*, www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/substantial-reduction. -WR

“**a reduction of 25 percent or more in the total dollar value of funds obligated by the contract.**”

Military

**Collins Dictionary**

*Military Presence Definition in American English | Collins English ...*, www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/military-presence. -WR

**“Military means relating to the armed forces of a country.”**

Presence

**Collins Dictionary**

*Military Presence Definition in American English | Collins English ...*, www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/military-presence. -WR

**“Someone's presence in a place is the fact that they are there.”**

West Asia

**United Nations Environmental Program**

United Nations. “West Asia.” *Ozonaction*, UN Environment Programme, www.unep.org/ozonaction/networks/west-asia. -WR

“The West Asia Regional Ozone Officers Network was approved in 1997 to enhance, strengthen and catalyze efforts of member countries to achieve and sustain their compliance with the Montreal Protocol and its amendments targeting the phase-out of the Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) in a timely manner with minimum negative impacts on economic and social aspects. **The West Asia region comprises the following member countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, State of Palestine (observer), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.”**

North Africa

**Encyclopedia Britannica**

“North Africa.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 Jan. 2024, www.britannica.com/place/North-Africa. -WR

**“North Africa, region of Africa comprising the modern countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. The geographic entity North Africa has no single accepted definition.** It has been regarded by some as stretching from the Atlantic shores of Morocco in the west to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea in the east, though this designation is more commonly referred to as northern Africa.”

Value-Criterion

**Value: Global security**

**Cambridge Dictionary**Cambridge. “Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University, 2024, dictionary.cambridge.org/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“Protection of the world against war and other threats.”**

**Criterion: Consequentialism**

**Sinnott-Armstrong 19**Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "Consequentialism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/consequentialism -CD

“Consequentialism, as its name suggests, is simply the view that **normative properties depend only on consequences.** This historically important and still popular theory embodies the basic intuition that **what is best or right is whatever makes the world best in the future**, because we cannot change the past, so worrying about the past is no more useful than crying over spilled milk. This general approach can be applied at different levels to different normative properties of different kinds of things, but the most prominent example is probably **consequentialism about the moral rightness of acts,** which **holds that whether an act is morally right depends only on the consequences of that act** or of something related to that act, such as the motive behind the act or a general rule requiring acts of the same kind.”

Contention 1 - Red Sea/Suez Canal Protection

US presence is necessary for Red Sea protection

**Kube 2024** Kube, Courtney. “U.S. and U.K. Launch New Strikes against Houthi Sites in Yemen.” *NBCNews.Com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 22 Jan. 2024, www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/us-uk-launch-new-strikes-houthi-sites-yemen-rcna135119. -WR

“The U.S. and British militaries launched a fresh round of strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen on Monday, defense officials said. The attacks, which were carried out by manned aircraft and ships, were the second round of strikes the two militaries have launched against Houthi sites in Yemen. The last round was on Jan. 11. Since then, **the U.S. has struck several Houthi targets on its own to prevent the group from attacking ships in the Red Sea.** U.S. Central Command said in a statement that the latest operation, which was supported by Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands, struck eight Houthi sites in Yemen "used to attack international merchant vessels and U.S. Navy ships in the region." The targets included missile systems and launchers, air defense systems, radars, and deeply-buried weapons storage facilities, the statement said. "These strikes are intended to degrade Houthi capability to continue their reckless and unlawful attacks on U.S. and U.K. ships as well as international commercial shipping in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden," the statement added. **The Houthis, an Iranian-backed militia group that controls large swaths of territory in Yemen, have launched dozens of attacks against commercial ships and military vessels in the Red Sea in recent months. The group says the strikes are in retaliation for Israel’s bombing of Gaza after Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel.** The violence has further fueled fears that the conflict in Israel could escalate into a regional war. The U.S. redesignated the Houthis last week as a terrorist organization, a move designed to cut off funding to the rebel group. The Biden administration had removed the group from the U.S.' terrorist list shortly after it took office to ease the flow of food, medicine and other aid into strife-torn Yemen.”

US Military is carrying out strikes against Houthi Rebels in Yemen/Red Sea Area

**Al Jazeera 2024** Al Jazeera. “US Carries out New Strikes on Houthi Missiles in Yemen, Iraq Sites.” *Al Jazeera*, 24 Jan. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/24/us-carries-out-new-strikes-on-houthi-missiles-in-yemen-iraq-sites. -WR

**“The United States military launched new strikes in Yemen against Houthi antiship missiles and facilities** in Iraq targeting Iran-backed armed groups it says were behind missile and drone attacks on US troops in Iraq and Syria. **The strikes in Yemen**, which took place at 2:30am on Wednesday (23:30 GMT on Tuesday) **are the latest attacks against the Iran-aligned group which has been attacking shipping in the Red Sea** and has warned it would not stop. “**US forces identified the missiles in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and determined that they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and the US Navy ships in the region,**” the military’s Central Command said, adding that two missiles were destroyed in “self-defence”. The Houthis, who control the most populous parts of Yemen and support Hamas, say their attacks are in solidarity with Palestinians amid Israel’s relentless bombardment of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian health ministry says more than 25,000 people have been killed and more than 63,000 wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza following Hamas’s assault in Israel on October 7, which Israeli officials say killed 1,139 people. **Since the US and its allies started attacking Houthi military sites on January 11, the Pentagon says it has destroyed or degraded more than 25 missile launch and deployment facilities, more than 20 missiles, while also hitting drones, coastal radar, the group’s air surveillance capabilities and weapons storage areas.** Separately on Wednesday, the US targeted sites used by Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin announced, days after US troops in the country were attacked. On Saturday, four US personnel suffered traumatic brain injuries after the Ain al-Asad airbase in western Iraq was hit by multiple ballistic missiles and rockets allegedly fired by Iranian-backed militants. “US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by the Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia group and other Iran-affiliated groups in Iraq,” Austin said in a statement. “These precision strikes are in direct response to a series of escalatory attacks against US and Coalition personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias,” he noted. **Kataib Hezbollah military spokesperson Jaafar al-Husseini said in a post on X that the group would continue to target “enemy bases” until the end of Israel’s siege in Gaza and singled out US support for Israel’s campaign.** Iraqi sources said at least two people were killed and two wounded in the latest strikes in Jurf al-Sakhar, south of the capital Baghdad, as well as in the al-Qaim area on the border with Syria. Iraq’s army said the US attack harmed “security and stability” in the country. “This unacceptable act undermines years of cooperation, blatantly violates Iraq’s sovereignty, and leads to an irresponsible escalation at a time when the region faces the danger of expanding conflict over the immoral war of extermination that the Palestinian people are facing,” Major General Yahya Rasool was quoted by the Iraqi News Agency as saying. A senior Iraqi official said that US air raids “do not help bring calm”. “The US side should pile on pressure for a halt to the [Israeli] offensive in Gaza rather than targeting and bombing the bases of an Iraqi national body,” Qasim al-Araji, national security adviser, said in a post on X.He was referring to the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), also known as Hashd al-Shaabi, an alliance of Iran-aligned former paramilitary groups now integrated with Iraq’s armed forces. Iraq has also condemned previous such attacks, with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani calling for US-led coalition troops in the country to leave. Meanwhile, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday that the US has asked China to urge Iran to rein in the Houthi rebels, but has seen little sign of help from Beijing. Washington has repeatedly raised the matter with top Chinese officials in the past three months, it said. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also raised the issue with his Chinese counterpart, the report said, adding that US officials believe there was little evidence that China had put any pressure on Iran to restrain the Houthis beyond a mild statement Beijing issued last week.”

Contention 2 - Climate/economic impacts

Boats are avoiding Suez Canal in the Red Sea due to Houthi Rebel Attacks

**Jolly 2023** Jolly, Jasper. “More than 100 Container Ships Rerouted from Suez Canal to Avoid Houthi Attacks.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 20 Dec. 2023, www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/20/more-than-100-container-ships-rerouted-suez-canal-red-sea-houthi-attacks-yemen. -WR

**“More than 100 container ships have been rerouted around southern Africa to avoid the Suez canal, in a sign of the disruption to global trade caused by Houthi rebels attacking vessels on the western coast of Yemen.** The shipping company Kuehne and Nagel said it had identified 103 ships that had already changed course, with more expected to go around South Africa’s Cape of Good Hope. **The diversion adds about 6,000 nautical miles to a typical journey from Asia to Europe, potentially adding three or four weeks to product delivery times. The Houthi rebels, who are aligned with Iran, have said they attacked ships in response to Israel’s bombardment of Gaza.** Israel is retaliating against an attack by Hamas, which controls Gaza. The US said on Tuesday it would try to lead a naval coalition to protect shipping in the Suez canal. About 19,000 ships navigate the Suez canal every year, making it one of the world’s key routes, particularly for fossil fuels and goods moving between Asia and Europe. The ships that had diverted so far had the capacity to carry 1.3m 20ft (6-metre) containers, Kuehne and Nagel said. Oil and gas tankers have also diverted, with BP the biggest company to publicly state that it has done so. Its rival Shell declined to comment…” (Same article continued below)

Negative economic impacts due to ships avoiding the Suez Canal

**Jolly 2023** Jolly, Jasper. “More than 100 Container Ships Rerouted from Suez Canal to Avoid Houthi Attacks.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 20 Dec. 2023, www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/20/more-than-100-container-ships-rerouted-suez-canal-red-sea-houthi-attacks-yemen. -WR

(Article continued) **“...The disruption has contributed to higher oil prices.** The price of Brent crude oil futures, the global benchmark, rose by 1.2% on Wednesday above $80, having fallen below $74 a week earlier. **Further price increases could eventually feed through to consumer energy tariffs, adding to inflation.** Michael Aldwell, Kuehne and Nagel’s board member for sea logistics, said: “**The extended time spent on the water is anticipated to absorb 20% of the global fleet capacity, leading to potential delays in the availability of shipping resources.** Moreover, delays in returning empty equipment to Asia are likely to pose challenges, further impacting the overall reliability of supply chains.” **Companies around the world, including several large carmakers, are monitoring the situation to work out if their supply chains could be affected.** The last big unexpected closure of the Suez canal came in March 2021, when the Ever Given container ship blocked passage for six days. The latest disruption will not affect the retail industry this Christmas, because stocks are built up weeks or even months in advance, meaning products are already in stores or in UK warehouses. An extended disruption to normal shipping patterns could eventually cause shortages of products for consumers or parts for manufacturers, although few have reported any effects so far. The disruption has coincided with a period in which many factories shut down temporarily for Christmas, giving some extra time for companies to receive crucial supplies. Some manufacturers had already switched from “just-in-time” supply chains that relied on goods arriving promptly, to a less efficient – but more resilient – “just-in-case” model with more emergency stockpiles of parts.”

Negative climate impacts from boats avoiding Suez Canal

**Baker 2024** Baker, Aryn. “The Climate Impact of Avoiding the Panama and Suez Canals.” *Time CO2 Futures*, Time, 19 Jan. 2024, time.com/collection/time-co2-futures/6556409/panama-suez-canal-climate-impact/ -WR

“For a preview of what a hotter, more geopolitically unstable future might look like, you don’t have to go much further than the world’s shipping lanes—the daily commute for most of our consumer goods, from solar panels to electric car batteries, refrigerators and sneakers. Drought exacerbated by climate change in Central America has reduced traffic through the Panama Canal by 40%. **Shipping through the Suez Canal, linking Europe to Asia, has also come to a near standstill as Iranian-backed Houthi militants in Yemen escalate attacks on Red Sea cargo ships in what they say is a protest against Israel’s military campaign in Gaza.** There are alternatives of course. Shippers with New York-bound goods from the Chinese port of Shanghai can dock in Los Angeles and truck their wares across the U.S. instead. And **cargo ships plying the Europe-Asia route through the Suez Canal can take the long way around Africa. Those alternatives are often slower—adding up to 15 days on some Europe-Asia routes—and more expensive. But the bigger long-term cost comes in the form of increased planet-warming carbon emissions.** Jacob Armstrong, the shipping policy manager for the Brussels-based sustainable transport advocacy organization Transport & Environment, calculated the extra emissions produced by one such cargo ship, the Al Zubara, which is currently taking the long route from the European port of Rotterdam to China. According to Armstrong, **the Al Zubara would normally produce 7,841 metric tons of CO2 going through the Suez Canal. Now diverted around South Africa, it will emit 10,360 tons of CO2, at an increase of 2,519 tons, which is the equivalent of burning 13.9 rail cars’ worth of coal.** (Sequestering that amount of carbon would require 41,652 tree seedlings to grow for 10 years). **Considering that 68 ships transit the Suez Canal per day on average, and that approximately 95% of the traffic is currently being rerouted, that could come to an extra 162,727 tons of emissions for every day that the conflict continues** (about the same amount that a natural-gas fired power plant emits over five months). “Disruption to global trade does tend to mean more emissions. So yeah, so this is really bad for the climate,” says Armstrong. **Nonetheless, a weeks-long diversion around Africa for a couple of hundred boats is likely to have a marginal climate impact compared to other major sources of emissions,** says Jean-Paul Rodrigue, a professor of maritime business administration at Texas A&M University-Galveston. “Of course, everybody would prefer Suez to be used and hopefully it’s going to come back as soon as possible, but shipping is still the most environmentally sound and efficient way to move stuff over long distances.” Still, **every ton of emissions counts, especially when rising temperatures are driving unexpected weather changes with significant economic impacts, particularly when it comes to transport.** Drought along the Mississippi River basin in the U.S., and around the Rhine River in Europe, choked river transport last year. Now it is slowing trade through the Western Hemisphere’s most important route. Unlike the Suez Canal, which links two bodies of water at similar elevations, transit through the Panama Canal relies on a series of ascending locks that use water drawn from a nearby lake. But several seasons of little-to-no rainfall have lowered the water levels, and as a result boats passing through the canal have had to reduce their cargo loads by 40% in order to reduce draft. That translates into diversions, delays, and additional CO2 emissions, especially if shippers turn instead to diesel powered trains and trucks to transport goods overland. Even if Armstrong agrees that the overall emissions impact of choked traffic on both the Suez and Panama canals is marginal, that calculus could change should continued delays drive a greater demand for speed. Shipping companies avoid traveling at full throttle to conserve fuel costs. But if global demand for goods increases, so too will transportation fees, and cargo ships will be more likely to lay on the gas, increasing emissions exponentially, says Armstrong. “Shipping speed, not distance, is actually the biggest threat for climate impacts. If a ship speeds up, it’s not like emissions go up relative to the increase. The relationship is cubic, so it’s a lot more.” Armstrong calculates that if shipping companies reduced their speed by 10%, total emissions for the global shipping sector would be reduced by 30%—a significant improvement for an industry responsible for 2% of global emissions, on par with Germany. Even when additional journeys are factored in to make up for slower turnaround times, the end result was a 19% reduction in emissions. “There are a lot of simple things that can be done to reduce shipping’s climate impact,” says Armstrong. “Slowing down is the simplest.” If anything, the bottlenecks in the two canals proves that the industry is resilient. While shipping fees have gone up, economies of scale mean that prices on the transported goods themselves have not. Long term, that may change. But short term, it proves that a cargo ship transporting refrigerators and sneakers from China to Europe around the Horn of Africa can take several days longer with little impact on the end consumer. That also means it could probably slow down once the Suez Canal opens up again, with a much better impact on emissions, and the climate.”

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Additional Arguments/Evidence

There is little chance of military escalation/war between United States and China in the region

**Hass 2017** Ryan Hass, Tanvi Madan, et al. “U.S. Security Policy in Asia: Implications for China-U.S. Relations.” *Brookings*, Brookings Institute, 10 May 2017, www.brookings.edu/articles/u-s-security-policy-in-asia-implications-for-china-u-s-relations/. -WR

**“In the post-Cold War era, with the decline of the likelihood of a war between major powers and the rise of nontraditional security challenges, military means have become less relevant in the national security equation.** Nonetheless, the United States remains heavily dependent upon military approaches, preserving its superior military power, strengthening its security alliances and maintaining its forward deployments. Surprisingly, the United States uses force even more frequently than it did in the Cold War era. **In contrast to the force-prone military security approach on the part of the United States, China has been advocating the concept of comprehensive security since the demise of the Cold War.** In Beijing’s opinion, security is best enhanced by improving political relations, expanding economic interactions and pursuing security cooperation, such as transparency, CBMs and military-to-military relations. **China believes that overemphasizing military approaches not only does not help resolve disputes**, but also runs counter to the prevailing trend of peace and development in the post-Cold War era.”

Military presence is a preventative measure

**Freiman 2023**Freiman, J. (2023, November 7). *How the U.S. has increased its military presence in the Middle East amid israel-hamas war*. CBS News. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-military-assets-in-middle-east/ -WR

**“The U.S. has increased its military presence in the Middle East since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas. The deployment of Defense Department assets to the region is aimed at deterring the conflict from widening into a larger regional war,** U.S. officials say. Here's a look at some of the known groups and equipment that have been sent to the area. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group. The aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower arrived in the Red Sea south of Israel over the weekend. The strike group also includes a guided missile cruiser, two missile destroyers and an entire air wing comprised of helicopters, fighter jets and 5,000 sailors. The strike group is headed toward the Persian Gulf — a clear message directed at Iran — but will most likely remain outside the gulf. Nuclear-powered submarine. The Pentagon revealed Sunday that an Ohio-class submarine — a nuclear-powered vessel — crossed through the Suez Canal. Ohio-class subs can carry 154 tomahawk cruise missiles. Submarines, sometimes called the "silent service," operate mostly in secret and the release of this information from the Defense Department was deliberate. Ford Carrier Strike Group. The Ford Carrier Strike Group is currently in the Mediterranean Sea after being sent to the region in late October. The group includes the USS Ford and three ballistic missile defense ships. Other U.S. warships in the Middle East. The USS Mount Whitney command ship has also been sent to the eastern Mediterranean Sea. In the Red Sea, joining the Eisenhower Strike Group, are four warships: Bataan, Carter Hall, Hudner and Carney. The USS Carney, a Navy destroyer, recently shot down cruise missiles and drones launched from Yemen that may have been headed toward Israel. U.S. troops in the region. **The firepower from these warships is a deterrent, but it is also to help protect the 45,000 U.S. service members and contractors that are stationed in the Middle East.** Most are in Kuwait, but thousands are in Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Pentagon has also deployed 1,200 troops to the Middle East, though not to Israel, since the war began. On Oct. 26, the Defense Department announced it was sending 900 troops, primarily for air defense, to the region. Another 300 troops, mostly ordnance disposal, communications and other support, were announced Oct. 31.”

Anti- US military presence arguments lack applicability

**Wechsler 2021** Wechsler, William. “No, the US Shouldn’t Withdraw from the Middle East.” *Atlantic Council*, 24 June 2021, www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/no-the-us-shouldnt-withdraw-from-the-middle-east/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

“The authors assert that “the Greater Middle East holds limited interests for US national security” because historical assumptions have been “upended by new realities.” In order to assess this argument, it is necessary to enumerate those national security interests, which are more extensive than the authors describe. **US interests have remained consistent over time: ensuring that the region’s vital energy resources continue to be extracted and shipped safely around the world, driven by market demand rather than mercantilism, supporting a delicate balance of power that promotes regional stability and protects US allies**, especially Israel, thwarting adversaries, particularly peer competitors, from expanding harmful influence in the region and undermining US goals, disrupting terrorist threats to Americans and US partners, preventing the regional proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, encouraging bilateral trade and economic prosperity, which have indirect positive effects on the other interests , **It’s important to note that my colleagues’ arguments don’t include any of the important values-based interests that many others contend should be central to US policies in the region. These include promoting democratic transitions, advancing human rights, combating corruption, providing humanitarian relief, and ending local military conflicts.** These omissions are notable, as it would strain credulity to assert that the United States would be well positioned to influence these interests after being seen as withdrawing from the region.”

Why US forces are in the Middle East

**Vergun 2023** Vergun, David. “U.S. Has 4 Objectives in Middle East.” *U.S. Department of Defense*, US DOD, 6 Nov. 2023, www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3581319/us-has-4-objectives-in-middle-east/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

“The Defense Department currently has four lines of effort in the Middle East, said Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, who briefed the media today. **1) Protection of U.S. forces and citizens in the region. 2) Flow of critical security assistance to Israel as it defends against further Hamas terrorist attacks. 3) Coordination with the Israelis to help secure the release of hostages held by Hamas, to include American citizens. 4) Strengthening of force posture across the region to deter any state or nonstate actors from escalating the crisis beyond Gaza.** Strengthened force posture includes the deployment of the USS Gerald R. Ford and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Groups, which are currently in the U.S. Central Command area, along with an Ohio-class submarine. Over the past few weeks there have been attacks by Iranian proxy groups at al-Asad air base, Iraq, and al-Tanf, Syria, on U.S. forces there, Ryder said. The attacks, by drones and missiles, resulted in several dozen injuries, including a mix of minor injuries and traumatic brain injuries, he said. Some of those injured didn't immediately report their condition, he said. "The reporting data is highly dependent on self-reporting when individual injuries are not visually evident to medical personnel providing care directly following an incident," he said.”

Global economic harms as a result of conflict in the Middle East

**Schnieder 2023** Schnieder, Howard. “Middle East Conflict Adds New Risks to Global Economic Outlook.” *Reuters*, 8 Oct. 2023, www.reuters.com/markets/middle-east-conflict-adds-new-risks-global-economic-outlook-2023-10-08/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“The outbreak of military conflict in the Middle East may** leave central bankers battling new inflationary trends **as well as deal a blow to economic confidence** at a time when they had expressed growing hope about containing the price surge sparked by the pandemic and Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The stunning violence in Israel, with hundreds killed as fighters from the Hamas movement invaded from their Gaza enclave and Israel responded in force, added the possibility of a broader Middle East conflict to the sense of global instability sparked by Russian military actions almost 20 months ago. **The impact may take time to become clear, and would depend on how long the conflict lasts, how intense it becomes, and whether it spreads to other parts of the region.** "It’s too early to say" what the implications may be, though oil and equity markets may see immediate fallout, Agustin Carstens, general manager of the Bank for International Settlements, said in a presentation to the National Association for Business Economics. But **the war has the potential at least to add an unpredictable set of forces to a global economy that was already slowing and to U.S. markets still adapting to the likelihood that the Federal Reserve will maintain high interest rates longer than many investors had expected.”**

Oil prices increasing as a result of Middle East war

**Gill 2023** Gill, Indermit. “The Middle East Conflict Is Threatening to Cripple a Fragile Global Economy.” *Brookings* , Brookings Institute, 16 Nov. 2023, [www.brookings.edu/articles/the-middle-east-conflict-is-threatening-to-cripple-a-fragile-global-economy/](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-middle-east-conflict-is-threatening-to-cripple-a-fragile-global-economy/). -WR

**“For a global economy still struggling in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, steep interest rates, and record-high debt levels, the latest conflict in the Middle East poses a grave danger.** There are reasons to be hopeful: The global economy is now much better equipped to handle oil-price shocks than it was in the 1970s. Yet it would be reckless to ignore the risk emanating from a region that accounts for nearly 30% of global oil production. **A major escalation of the conflict would push commodity markets into uncharted territory—the first time the world has endured shocks in two major energy-producing regions within a short period. So far, the conflict has been contained,** with only modest effects on commodity prices. Brent oil prices have declined nearly 4% a barrel since the start of the conflict after increasing 7% in the first two weeks after the attack. Prices of agricultural commodities and most metals have also seen minor declines. That may reflect the global economy’s improved ability to absorb oil price shocks. Since the energy crisis of the 1970s, countries have bolstered their defenses against such shocks by cutting their dependence on oil, diversifying oil suppliers, and expanding energy sources—including renewables. Several governments have established strategic petroleum reserves, improved international coordination and inventory management, and developed futures markets to mitigate the impact of oil shortages on prices. **But that resilience would vanish if the conflict spiraled out of control.** The World Bank’s latest Commodity Markets Outlook outlines three risk scenarios based on historical experience since the 1970s. **It suggests that the size of the effects would depend on the degree of disruption to oil supplies: In a “small disruption” scenario, global oil supplies would be reduced by 500,000 to 2 million barrels per day—roughly equivalent to the reduction seen during the Libyan Civil War in 2011. Under this scenario, oil prices would range between $93 and $102 a barrel.**

**In a “medium disruption” scenario—roughly equivalent to the Iraq War in 2003—global oil supplies would be reduced by 3 to 5 million barrels per day, driving oil prices up to between $109 and $121 a barrel. In a “large disruption” scenario—comparable to the Arab oil embargo of 1973—global oil supplies would shrink by 6 to 8 million barrels per day, driving up prices to between $140 and $157 a barrel.”**

Higher Oil prices increase gas prices

**McHugh 2023** McHUGH, DAVID. “Oil Prices Have Risen. That’s Making Gas More Expensive for US Drivers and Helping Russia’s War.” *AP News*, 25 Sept. 2023, apnews.com/article/why-have-oil-prices-gone-up-a9f4ddbd815dd6c6fd90698443e7b8b3. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“Oil prices have risen, meaning drivers are paying more for gasoline and truckers and farmers more for diesel. The increase also complicates the global fight against inflation and feeds Russia’s war chest.** That poses problems for politicians as well as the people having to spend more to get to work, transport the world’s goods or harvest fields. Here are things to know about the recent increase — and where prices might be going: Above all, Saudi Arabia’s decision to cut back how much oil it sends to global markets has pushed prices higher. **The world’s second-largest oil supplier has slashed production by 1 million barrels a day since July and decided this month to extend the cut through the end of the year.** Russia, Saudi Arabia’s ally in the OPEC+ oil producers’ coalition, also extended its own cut of 300,000 barrels a month through 2023. **Simply, tighter supply means higher prices. I**nternational benchmark Brent oil traded at just under $94 per barrel Monday, up from $90 before the extension on Sept. 5 and from $74 before the Saudi cut was first announced. U.S. oil traded at around $90.50, up from $68 before the Saudi cut.”

Higher Gas prices harm Americans

**Sawhill 2012** Sawhill, Isabel V. “How Higher Gas Prices Hurt Less Affluent Consumers and the Economy.” *Brookings*, Brookings Institute, 6 Mar. 2012, www.brookings.edu/articles/how-higher-gas-prices-hurt-less-affluent-consumers-and-the-economy/. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“With rising gas prices now rivaling unemployment as a key issue in this year’s election, both the president and his Republican opponents have been speaking out** about what, if anything, should be done. Republicans argue that the nation needs more domestic oil and gas production while the president notes that oil is produced and sold on world markets, meaning that domestic supplies have a small impact on prices. That said, **rising gas prices do affect both consumers and the economy adversely, and they are especially harmful to lower- and moderate-income households.** One assumption is that these households do not all own cars, that many use mass transit instead. Looking at all households with annual incomes less than $50,000, it turns out that the vast majority (80%) do own cars, and a significant portion (over a third) own more than one car. Of course, even if they do not own cars, higher gas prices can affect mass transit riders as well once higher costs show up at the fare box, although this undoubtedly occurs with more of a lag. Among low-to-moderate-income households that do own cars, they drove about 10,000 miles and spent about $1,500 on motor fuel during 2010 when the average price of gasoline was about $2.80. Gas prices are now approaching $3.80 a gallon, and some observers believe they could reach $5.00 by this summer. Every dollar increase, holding the number of miles driven constant, would cost these moderate- and lower-income households an extra $530 per year. **For a family with an annual income of $20,000, this is an additional 2.7% of their total income.** Although higher gas prices eventually encourage consumers to cut back on driving or switch to more fuel-efficient vehicles, in the short-run they may have few options but to cut back on other expenditures in the family budget. Since low- and moderate-income families’ spend most of their income on average, in the very short run **they can only choose between spending less on other items and going further into debt.** In addition, less spending on other items operates much like higher taxes in slowing an incipient recovery. **In other words, higher gas prices drain purchasing power from the economy. That means that these families get hit twice: once by the direct impact on their household budgets but a second time when higher prices retard the economic recovery.** In a paper published (PDF) in the Brookings Papers on Economic Activity on the contribution of oil price shocks to past U.S. recessions, James D. Hamilton finds that they slowed GDP growth significantly, often enough to tip the economy into a recession. Goldman Sachs estimates that just the oil price increase since December will shave between a quarter and a half of a percentage point off of real GDP growth over the next year, and the effects could be more dire if oil prices continue to rise.”

Military position is key for preserving US military advantage

**Olsen 2023** Olsen, Nathan. “Preserving U.S. Military Advantages in the Middle East.” *The Washington Institute*, 14 May 2023, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/preserving-us-military-advantages-middle-east. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

**“The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) calls on the U.S. military to sustain enduring advantages and build new ones for the future fight.** According to the NDS, **building and maintaining advantages to advance U.S. national interests will allow the military to deter attacks against the United States** and its allies and partners, while fostering a resilient military force and defense ecosystem. **In the Middle East, this challenge is especially relevant. The United States has several enduring advantages that could eventually disappear if the U.S. government does not make significant changes in how it operates in this part of the world.**”

US position is necessary to combatting China

**Rasheed 2023** Rasheed, Zaheena. “In Bid to Counter China, US Ramps up Effort to Boost Military Ties in Asia.” *Al Jazeera*, 28 Dec. 2023, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/28/in-bid-to-counter-china-us-ramps-up-effort-to-boost-military-ties-in-asia. Accessed 05 Feb. 2024. -WR

“On May 30, the United States accused China of intercepting one of its spy planes in an “unnecessarily aggressive manoeuvre” over the South China Sea. The American RC-135 plane, according to the US military, was conducting routine operations over the sensitive waterway when a Chinese fighter jet flew directly in front of its nose. A video shared by the US Indo-Pacific Command showed the cockpit of the RC-135 shaking in the wake of turbulence of the Chinese jet. Days later, on June 5, the US again accused China of carrying out what it said was an “unsafe” manoeuvre near one of its vessels. This time it was around a warship in the Taiwan Strait. The US Indo-Pacific Command again released a video of the incident, showing a Chinese vessel cutting sharply across the path of a US destroyer at a distance of some 137 metres (150 yards), forcing the latter to slow down to avoid a collision. Washington said the near misses showed China’s “growing aggressiveness”, but Beijing said the US was to blame, accusing its rival of deliberately “provoking risk” by sending aircraft and vessels for “close in reconnaissance” near its shores – moves it said posed a serious danger to its national security. The close calls evoked memories of a deadly incident on April 1, 2001, when a Chinese fighter jet and a US surveillance plane collided in the sky over the South China Sea. The impact caused the Chinese jet to crash and killed the pilot, while the US plane was forced to make an emergency landing in China’s Hainan. Beijing held the 24 American aircrew members for 11 days and only released them when Washington apologised for the incident. While the two countries were able to de-escalate tensions then, **there are worries that a similar mishap today could widen into a bigger conflict due to the deterioration in relations between the superpowers. The US views China as the biggest challenge to the Western-dominated international order, pointing to Beijing’s rapid military buildup** – the biggest in peacetime history – as well as its claims over the self-governed island of Taiwan and in the East and South China Seas. The US military’s so-called “freedom of navigation exercises” in the contested waterways near China are part of a push by the administration of President **Joe Biden to deepen and expand its diplomatic and military presence in the Asia Pacific. The campaign – which has accelerated over the past year – stretches from Japan to the Philippines and Australia**, and from India to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The “once in a generation effort,” as Gregory Poling, director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, puts it, **involves the opening of new embassies in the region, deployment of troops and more advanced military assets, as well as obtaining access to sites in key areas facing the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.”**