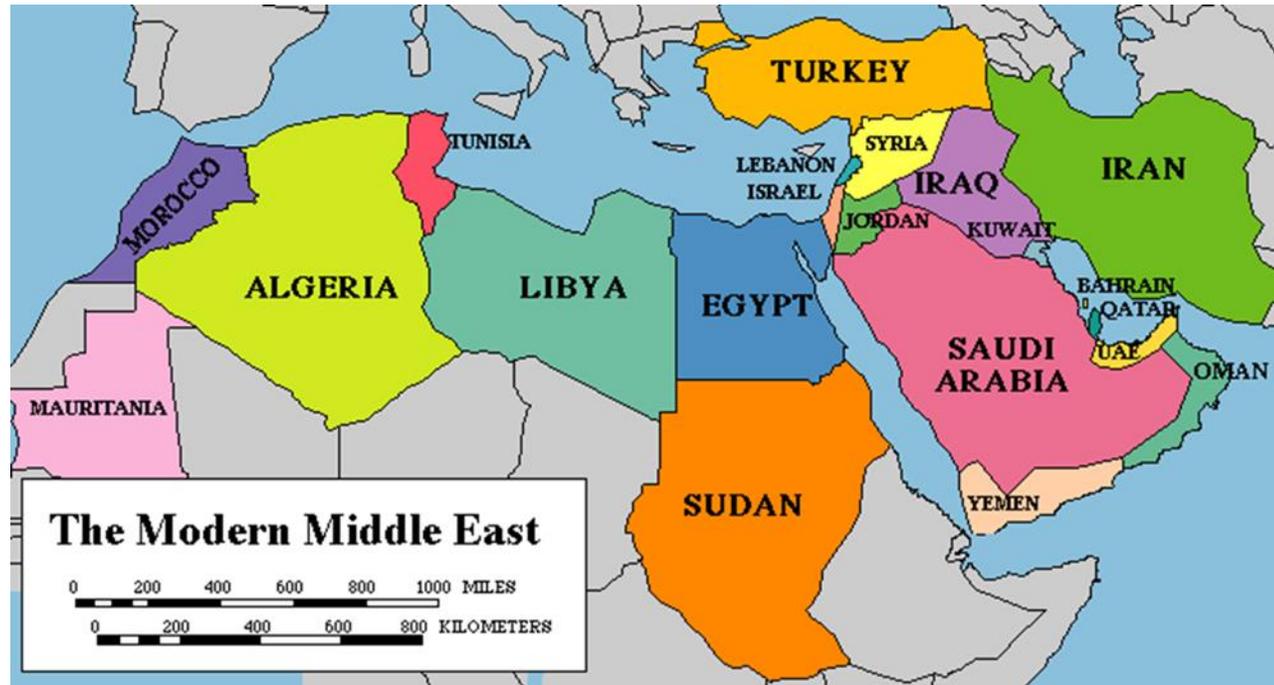


# The Middle East: Regional Disorder



# A Complex Landscape

**400 Million People**

**22 Countries**

**3 Major Religions**

**5 Primary Languages**

**Historic Disputes**



# One Very Dangerous Neighborhood



# Sources of Conflict: Some Historical Context



- Strategic Geo-Political Location
  - Attention of Succession of Outside Powers
- Vital (Oil), Scarce (Water) Resources
- Cultural, Ethnic, Religious Sectarianism
- Weak Political Institutions/Corruption
- Control of Land & Waterways
  - Source of Power

# Regional Disorder: Some New Wrinkles

- Shifting Political Winds
- Struggle for Regional Hegemony
- Strained Alliances
- Resurgent Russia
- Unpredictable US



# The Major Fault Lines

- Internal/Local
- Regional
- Global



# 1. Internal/Local Fault Lines

- Failed/Failing States: Legacy of Arab Spring

Transformation → Tunisia

Retrenchment → Egypt

Disintegration → Libya; Yemen

Implosion → Syria



- Rise of Non-State Actors

Islamic State → Syria; Iraq

Hezbollah → Lebanon

Hamas → Palestine



## 2. Regional Fault Lines

- Saudi Arabia/Iran
  - Domestic Challenges
  - Regional Aspirations
- Israel/Palestine
- Some Wild Cards
  - Turkey, Syria & the Kurds



# 3. Global Fault Lines

- Weapons → Iran Nuclear Deal
- Terror → Syria & the Islamic State
- Export of Regional Instability
  - Wither Russia?
  - Wither the United States?



# US Policy

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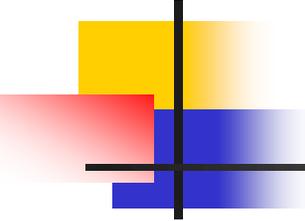
# US Policy: Conflicting Imperatives

- Need to Protect Enduring Interests but .....



- Desire to Stay Clear of Region's Unending Headaches





# A Look Back: Core Post-War Interests

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- *Preserve* Flow of Energy Supplies & Commercial Activity
- *Support* Security & Stability of Key Partners
- *Prevent* Proliferation of WMDs
- *Counter* Terrorism
- *Enhance* Prosperity & *Defend* Human Rights

# US Policy in Practice: Alternative Strategies

- The Cold War

Great Power Prism



- The Immediate Post-Cold War

The 9/11 Game Changer & War on Terror



- The Obama Imprint

Iran

Syria

Israel/Palestine





# US Policy: Trump World



# Current Middle East "Policy": Trump As...

- Conflicted, Naïve Warrior ... Syria
- Unilateral Crusader ... Iran
- Authoritarian Supporter ... Saudi Arabia
- Exporter of Domestic Politics ... Israel

Underlying it all .....

- The Anti-Obama



# US Policy: The Challenges Ahead

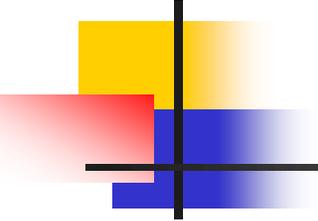
- Contain Existing Fires
  - Iran ↔ Saudi Arabia ... Yemen
- Manage Critical 'Buffer' Relationships
  - Jordan
  - Gulf States
  - Turkey
- Pre-Empt Potential Flashpoints
  - Syria & Iraq ... Islamic State ... The Kurds
- Attend to Israel/Palestine



# Advancing US Interests: Key Ingredients

- Vision
  - Balance Short/Long Term Interests
- Strategy
  - Predictability & Reliability
  - Mix of Policy Tools
- Process
  - Policy Coherence
  - Elevate Strategic Interests Over Personal Politics
- Political Will
  - Endure Costs to Attain Vital Objectives





Moving Forward, The Question Is ...

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Are We Up To The Task?