

International Shifts and Their Security Impact on the Gulf: Key Trends and Key Numbers

*Impact on US Global and Regional Commitments,
Iran, the GCC, the Gulf Military Balance, Energy,
Terrorism, and Key Causes of Instability*

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Request for comments:

This report is a draft that will be turned into an electronic book. Comments and suggested changes would be greatly appreciated. Please send any comments to Anthony H. Cordesman, Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy, at acordesman@gmail.com.

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International Shifts and Their Security Impact on the Gulf: Quantifying Key Trends

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I have been asked to help set the stage for this conference by looking at the broader issues that can address the issue of *A World with No Axis? International Shifts and their Impact on the Gulf*.

I have spent enough time in the Gulf over the years to know how often people have strong opinions, interesting conspiracy theories, and a tendency to ignore hard numbers and facts. We all suffer from the same problems, but today I'm going to focus as much on facts and numbers as possible.

I'm only going to select only a portion of the key trends and numbers involved in my oral remarks, but I will leave the conference with a much longer paper that lists a fuller range of such data. This paper that will also be on the CSIS web site, along with a series of very detailed papers on the military balance in the Gulf.

If you want to provide me with your card, I'll also make sure the papers involved are sent to you directly.

International Shifts in the Balance of Power

Let me begin with the issue of international shifts in the balance of power. The US must deal with the emergence of China as a major regional, and potential global power, although this may well prove to be more a matter of competition than a threat.

At the same time, the US has had to constantly respond to "international shifts" since it emerged as a global power and has never been able to treat the world as if it had one major power or axis.

- The rebalancing to Asia may seem new, but the US has had security problems in dealing with Asia since 1931, ranging from Japan to China to Vietnam to China.
- Similarly Russia and the Ukraine may seem to be new challenges, but the US invaded Russia in 1918, dealt with the rise of communism – had Russia as an ally from 1941 to 1946, lived with the Cold War, saw the break up of the USSR and then began to have problems with Russia over Serbia, the expansion of NATO, Croatia, and now the Ukraine – moreover, the problems of dealing with Europe have been an ongoing challenge since 1914.
- The US became actively involved in the Middle East in World War II, has been directly involved in the Arab-Israeli crisis since 1945, became a key military player in the Gulf after British withdrawal, and has been involved in two major wars since 1990 and now is edging into a third.

- While it may seem flattering to be called the “world’s only superpower,” in every case, the US has relieve on regional allies and partners, and on the support of friendly host country governments
- There also is nothing new about the challenges involved in creating and sustain such partnerships.
- The US has made many mistakes, and had to deal with many risks where it could not decisively or eliminate major risks,
- At the same time, it has always been the target of impossible expectations and demands that go far beyond our capacity, conspiracy theories, and the export of blame and responsibility for local problems.
- In short, if Qatar would like to replace the US as the world’s only superpower, it can do so with my blessing. As for China, there is an old American saying – “beware of answered prayers.”

Measuring the Key Trends in Power

It is certainly true that the US has had good reason to become more cautious about the end of history, the use of force, the impact of globalism, and trying to transform nations like Afghanistan and Iraq.

Here it is also important to note that the world needs to be far more cautious about assuming it can predict the impact of the next generations of change in multipolar power, the trends in the global economy, or even sub-issues like the growth of the demand for given types of energy.

In broad terms, however, the US remains a major and viable world power, and the emergence of other states does not mean the US role in the Middle East and the Gulf is less important.

- For all of the occasional talk of US decline, this month it is now US that seems to have stable economic growth. In contrast, Europe and Japan are in a second recession. India is failing to maintain the momentum of development. China faces growing limits on its growth – all of which has had a major impact in reducing the demand for energy and petroleum prices.
- This may not be true by next June. Economic history is a warning about the sheer uncertainty of looking even a year in the future – when any or all of these trends might again be reversed.
- As for the recent focus on US “decline,” Oswald Spengler wrote the *Decline of the West* in the summer of 1918. It is interesting that he partially exempted European-American culture from being part of the West, but there is a major difference between the emergence of other regions and the decline of the US.
- One also has to be careful about one’s choice in metrics. The US has been a steadily smaller share of the global GDP ever since 1945 – when some estimate put its share at 48%.

- Today, the CIA World Factbook estimates that the US GDP is a mere \$16.7 trillion that is only 19% of a global GDP of \$87.3 trillion. If one uses this metric, the US has been in constant decline ever since 1945.
- In contrast, China's GDP has risen to \$13.4 trillion in PPP terms. As Qatar above all other countries should know, however, comparisons of the total size of an economy have only limited meaning.
- Wealth and surplus capital are largely a function of wealth relative to population and the US per capita income \$52,800 is versus all of \$9,800 for China – although the US figure is only a fraction of a truly wealthy “superpower” like Qatar that has a per capita income of \$102,100.

Comparative Military Spending

It is also interesting to compare what this difference in the ability of governments to actually spend a nation's economic wealth means in terms of total military spending. The US has cut its military spending back to both ease its budget deficit and reflect the fact it is no longer active in two major regional wars.

- A relatively neutral NGO like the Swedish SIPRI estimates that the US spent some \$640 billion on military forces in 2013. This is still 37% of the world total of \$1,747 billion, and its estimate for China is 11%.
- A figure of \$640 billion is also 3.4 times SIPRI's estimate of \$188 billion for China, and 7.3 times its estimate of \$87.8 billion for Russia. It is 13.5 times the \$47.4 billion being spent by India.
- Moreover, in spite the cuts in US military spending between 2007 and 2013, the 2013 report of NATO's Secretary General notes that the US share of total NATO spending increase from 68% to 73% during this period, while Europe dropped by some 5%.
- Moreover, Britain and France -- the only two European powers with serious power projection capabilities in the Gulf region, cut their share of NATO total spending from 13.9% to 11.5%.

The US Partnership with Arab Allies and the GCC States

What matters most to this region, in practical terms, is that the US is still firmly committed to both a role in the region and a strategic partnership with its Arab allies.

- For all the talk of a “pivot to Asia,” the new strategic guidance the US issue in 2012 referred to a rebalancing to Asia of some US naval and air force which it then felt were no longer needed in Europe – that strategic guidance gave equal priority to the security of the Middle east and to emphasize its strategic partnership with its allies in the region.
- This strategic priority has been repeated in every US defense budget submission through FY2015, and in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review – which set long term US strategic priorities through 2040.

- The US has have shown its willing to reintroduce combat forces to aid an ally like Iraq this year. We built up our naval and air presence in the Gulf before this, and deployed a new Special Forces Command ship and wide-area missile defense ships. And much of our limited mine warfare and patrol ship forces.
- Thanks to nations like Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE, the US can massively reinforce our air capabilities in days, and we have deployed new stealth systems like the F-22 and will soon be converted much of our combat air forces to the F-35 stealth strike fighter.
- Our global assets in air control and warning, maritime patrol, satellite intelligence, precision strike, missile launch and target warning, and IS&R (intelligence, surveillance, and warning systems) are available to all of our regional security partners. These can be massive force multipliers, as was demonstrated in liberating Kuwait in 1991.
- SIPRI estimates that Middle East received 28% of all US arms exports during 2009-2013– roughly twice the share of Europe.
- SIPRI estimates that the GCC countries alone ordered over \$50 billion worth of advanced US arms in delivery, including some of the most advanced combat aircraft and missile defense systems available. More broadly, SIPRI estimates that Saudi Arabia alone got 29% of all US arms exports during 2009-2013.

Why the US Is Not Going to Shift from Arab Allies to Iran

This may also be a good time to address one of the weirder conspiracy theories I keep hearing in this region: That the US somehow would turn to Iran at the expense of its present Arab allies.

- I would be the first to admit that the US makes mistakes and miscalculations, but it shows its deep military involvement in support of the GCC and other friendly Arab states on a daily basis,
- The US bases its forces and power projection capabilities in GCC countries that provide billions of dollars worth of bases and facilities.
- US arms transfers are tailored to interoperability with GCC forcers, and we have sought to continuously make this an operational reality through joint training and exercises.
- American also can count. There are far more Arabs and Sunnis than Iranians and Shi'ites and our most severe Arab critics in allied states do not call us the "great Satan."
- According to the CIA World Factbook, the GCC states alone have economies and trading capabilities with a total GDP of \$1,611 billion in official exchange rate terms, and Iran has a GDP of \$412 billion, and these and the following figures ignore the fact that Iraq is an Arab state.

- Iran is a far smaller trading power, with annual imports of some \$64 billion in 2014. Bahrain imported \$14 billion, Kuwait imported \$ 24 billion, Oman imported \$31 billion, Qatar imported \$40 billion, Saudi Arabia imported \$147 billion and the UAE imported \$ 250 billion. The total for the GCC is \$506 billion; eight times Iran's imports. Who would you rather trade with?
- There also is the little matter of energy reserves. If one uses the BP estimate of proved oil reserves for end 2013, the GCC has 497 billion barrels versus 157 billion barrels for Iran. This is 29% of world reserves versus 9.3% for Iran.
- If one uses the BP estimate of proved gas reserves for end 2013, the GCC has 1,475 trillion cubic feet versus 1193 trillion cubic feet for Iran. This is 23% of world reserves versus 18.2% for Iran – and gas imports are not a serious US concern.
- There are also the issues of US and Iranian competition for Iraq, the spoiler role Iran plays in dealing with Palestinians, Iranian support for Assad in Syria, Iranian support for the Hezbollah, Iranian activity in Bahrain and Yemen, and the direct threat Iran poses to Israel.

US Strategic Interests and Gulf Energy Exports

It is also worth noting in passing that US “energy independence” will at most be relative and is not something the US government currently predicts.

- The Department of Energy's *Annual Energy Outlook* for 2014 notes that no current estimate of future US dependence on the import of energy liquids can predict the impact of new technologies and sources of liquids with any accuracy.
- It also states, however, that in its Reference Case estimate, “U.S. use of imported petroleum and other liquid fuels continues to decline...mainly as a result of increased domestic oil production. Imported petroleum and other liquid fuels as a share of total U.S. use reached 60% in 2005 before dipping below 50% in 2010 and falling further to 40% in 2012. The import share continues to decline to 25% in 2016 and then rises to about 32% in 2040 in the *AEO2014* reference case, as domestic production of tight oil begins to decline in 2022. (http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/er/early_production.cfm.)
- The Department of Energy's November 2014 update to its estimate of world oil chokepoints (<http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=WOTC>) estimates that some 17 million barrels of oil per day, or 30% of all seaborne traffic in oil moved through the Strait of Hormuz, and 85% went to Asian markets with an other 3.5 million barrels a day going through the Saudi pipeline to the Red Sea and the UAE pipeline to a port in Fujairah on the Indian Ocean.
- Aside from the limited capacity off Iraqi pipelines through Turkey, the flow of both oil and a growing part of world gas exports to the global economy is

- critically dependent on the security and stability of the Gulf and the global price for oil – a price the US as well as all other countries must pay.
- The US recognizes its dependence on the overall health of the global economy and the dangers in leaving a power vacuum in the Gulf.
 - It does not quantify its dependence on indirect energy imports, but the CIA *World Factbook* makes this dependence clear. The US currently imports some \$2.3 trillion worth of goods a year, which is some 14% of a \$16.7 trillion economy in official exchange rate terms. Like American exports, these imports are critical to every aspect of the US economy.
 - The US indirectly imports a vast amount of oil and gas from Asian states that are critical dependent on Gulf oil. To quote two key examples, 19% of all American imports come from China and 6.4% from Japan.
 - The US Census Bureau "year to date" estimates for part of 2014 indicated that if India, South Korea, and Taiwan were added to the totals for China and Japan, the resulting total share of US imports would increase to \$554.5 billion. This would be 32% of the total 1,749.3 billion in imports for 2014 to date. (<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/toppartners.html>.)

Iran's Severe Military Limits and the Gulf Military Balance

Turning back from global trends to key security issues in the region, I have also been asked to address the issue of Iran as a regional superpower.

Well, the blunt truth is that it is time that the GCC states and other states stopped thinking of Iran as anything approaching a "regional superpower" and focused on collective security and making their own forces as effective as possible.

- Two Gulf states are in SIPRI's estimate of the top 15 spenders in the world on military forces in 2013: Saudi Arabia, with \$67 billion and the UAE with \$19 billion.
- SIPRI does not make such an estimate for Iran because of its uncertain reporting on military expenditure. It previous, however, has put Iranian spending at somewhere between \$10 and \$14 billion. Even if one assume \$15 billion would a comparable figure, US spending would be some 43 times this number, Saudi Arabia spending would be 4.5 times higher, and the UAE alone would be 1.3 times higher.
- The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in Britain provides a different set of direct comparisons of military spending. The 2014 edition of its annual military balance provides estimates for 2012.
- What counts most for this purpose, however is that the IISS estimate Iran's defense spending was a much higher \$23.9 billion in 2012. It estimates total US spending at 645.7 billion or 42% of a world total of \$1.525.7 billion, which would still be 27 times Iran.

- The IISS's latest figures for the GCC states, which use 2011 data for Qatar and the UAE and 2013 data for the rest, total \$77.7 billion or 3.25 times Iran.
- The disparity in Iranian versus GCC access to military technology and modern arms is even greater.
- Friendly Arab states have access to the most modern weapons in the world. Iran has only had marginal access to modern arms since 1980, is under UN sanctions, and key exporters like Russia and China have severely limited Iran's access to key systems like modern aircraft. Missiles, and SAM systems like the S300/S400.
- A declassified US intelligence estimate of regional new arms import agreements during 2008-2011 – systems now actually being delivered and absorbed into regional forces – put Iran's five year total at only \$300 million.
- The total for the GCC was \$75.6 billion, some 250 times higher. Saudi Arabia alone imported \$52.1 billion worth – 174 times higher.
- It is also a sign of the seriousness of the US strategic commitment to the GCC that the US is providing \$64.5 billion worth of these agreements, or some 70%.
- As for the actual military balance, the CSIS has done a long series of studies of the trends in regional forces that are available on the CSIS web site at <http://csis.org/program/us-and-iranian-strategic-competition>, and <http://csis.org/program/burke-chair-saudi-arabia-gcc-gulf>.
- Iran does pose a real military threat in two key areas. It has built up a powerful ballistic missile force, and a sophisticated mix of asymmetric air, sea, and anti-ship missile forces in the Gulf.
- Iran's Al Quds force and MOIS are active in Bahrain, Yemen, Gaza, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria although almost always in ways where their influence is limited, their partner is as interested in using Iran as Iran is interested in exploiting its partner, and Iran is limited to exploiting local tensions and a spoiler role. The tendency of Arab states to exaggerate Iran's role and blame Iran for internal problems and tensions does not mean Iran actually has that level of influence.
- Iran is seeking the ability to deploy precision guided missile forces. Its present missile forces, however, lack the lethality and accuracy to attack point targets and are largely terror weapons that can only be used against large area targets. The combination of GCC and US missile defenses provides a steadily better defense against even this threat.
- Even if one ignores the forces the US can deploy to the region, Iran falls far short of matching critical aspects of GCC military forces.
- Iran has not has any new aircraft or surface-to air missiles from the West since 1980, and much of its air force consists of systems delivered in the 1960s and 1970s. Even its most modern Russian aircraft are older export versions of the

MiG-29 and Su-24. Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE each have far more modern combat aircraft than Iran.

- Most of its surface-to-air missile force dates back to the 1970s, although Iran has tried to upgrade it. Its only modern systems consist of a small number of a short range TOR-Ms.
- Its major surface vessels also date back to the 1970s.
- It has far fewer modern armor and artillery systems than the GCC states.

How the GCC and Arab States Can Be Their Own Worst Enemy

It is also worth noting, that the governments of the GCC states -- rather than Iran -- are often their own worst enemies.

- While some Gulf state have pressed for added unity, and the staff of the GCC has often set the right priorities for force improvements, it is petty feuding between GCC regimes which has done most to limit interoperability and standardization, the full integration of key systems like air defense and maritime surveillance, the creation of integrated training and other facilities, fully effective military exercises, integrated counter-terrorism efforts, and integrated military aid to outside states and freedom fighters.
- These same tensions have done much to block efforts to deal with Iran's most serious threats. They have delayed and placed serious limits on creating integrated wide-area missile defense. They have led to competition in buying different and more advanced combat aircraft at the cost of buying and deploying effective mine warfare, patrol ships, and other counters to Iran's asymmetric warfare forces.
- More broadly, it is divisions between and within Arab states that have allow Iran to increase its influence and play a growing spoiler role in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.
- Quite frankly, if you are an Arab and live in a GCC state or the other Arab states just listed, and you want to see the real conspirator in wasting military spending, blocking effective military coordination and development, and empowering Iran in expanding its influence, just look in the mirror.
- Similarly, you might consider how much more influence you would have in a strategic partnership with the US and other powers if you aggraded on collective solutions to your real world security problems rather than export responsibility and blame.

The Other Security Threats: Civil War, Terrorism, Violent Religious Extremism, and Civil War

Iran is scarcely, however, is the only major source of threats or key international shifts that have an impact on the Gulf. Civil wars in Syria and Iraq, terrorism, and violent religious extremism all have a major impact.

Terrorism is a sharply growing regional and Gulf problem

- The US State Department START global data base on terrorism shows an increase from less than 300 major incidents a year in the MENA region during 1998 to 2004 to 1,600 in 2008, then from 1,500 in 2010 to 1,700 in 2011, 2,500 in 2012, and 4,650 in 2013 – a fifteen fold increase since 2002, and threefold increase since 2010.
- The unclassified START database covers every Gulf state except Oman. It provides eight different measures of terrorist activity for each country over a more than 10-year period, and is a clear warning that most Gulf states do face both some internal threat and growing external threats and pressures. It also warns just how different the perpetrators, methods of attack, and source of violence can be.
- A Rand study on the trends in terrorism led by Seth Carus, and that reported in 2014 found:
 - A 58-percent increase took in the number of Salafi-jihadist groups from 2010 to 2013.
 - The number of Salafi jihadists more than doubled from 2010 to 2013, according to both Rand’s low and high estimates.
 - Significant increases took place in the number of attacks by al Qa’ida-affiliated groups between 2007 and 2013, with most of the violence in 2013 perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (43 percent), which eventually left al Qa’ida; al Shabaab (25 percent); Jabhat al-Nusrah (21 percent); and al Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (10 percent).
 - Approximately 99 percent of the attacks by al Qa’ida and its affiliates in 2013 were against “near enemy” targets in North Africa, the Middle East, and other regions outside of the West.
- Another report by the Institute for Economics and Peace found that fatalities related to terrorism soared 60 percent last year, and five countries — Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria — accounted for four-fifths of the almost 18,000 fatalities attributed to terrorism in 2013. Iraq had the bloodiest record of all, with more than 6,300 fatalities.
 - The highest terrorism index in the world was for Iraq at 10. Syria had a score of 8.12. Yemen had a score of 7.31. Egypt was 6.5. Lebanon was 6.4. Iran had a score of 4.9. Bahrain was 4.41. Saudi Arabia was 2.71. Jordan was 1.76. The UAE was 0.29. Kuwait was 0.04. Oman and Qatar were zero.

Violent Religious Extremism

- There are no serious attempts to quantify the growing tension between Sunni, Shi'ite, and the other sects of Islam. It is all too clear, however, that this level of violence is serious and now seems higher than at the peak of the previous fighting in Iraq in 2006-2009.
- Violent Sunni extremist movements have become a growing threat to moderate Sunni and mixed regimes, as well as increasingly to each other.
- Islamic violence has steadily spilled over to affect minorities. For example, the US estimates that some 70% of the minority population that existed in Iraq in 2003 has not left the country or in the KRG zone of control.
- Religious violence interacts with ethnic and tribal tension.
- The struggle for the future of Islam has now been joined by a growing struggle over the control of the Dome of the Rock between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims,

Civil War in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen

- Civil war now exists in four Arab states -- Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen -- and may occur in Bahrain. It has only been contained by a repressive military coup in Egypt.
- These and lesser upheavals threaten governance and development in much of the region.
- Yemen is an extremely poor nation with some 26.1 million people, and a per capita income of only \$2,500 before its central government virtually collapsed because of fighting in the capital in late 2014. It now faces three sets of civil conflict: Houthi versus Sunni tribes. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula versus army, and potentially South successionists.
- Iraq is a nation of 32.6 million people that is now deeply divided between Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni and Kurd. The solution may be some form of federalism, but in October 2014 was a conflict with some 5.2 million Iraqis at risk and 2.8 million needing food aid, and an increase of 1.8 million IDPs since the start of the year. A \$7,100 GDP per capita in 2011 may have dropped by as much as 50% by late 2014.
- The Syrian civil war killed well over 191,000 civilians by mid-November 2014 and wounded or and injured more than 300,000 in a nation of some 17 million remaining residents. There are some 3.2 million refugees outside Syria and 6.45 million displaced persons -- half children. A total of 9.2 to 10.8 million Syrians are at risk, 4.6 million are in besieged or hard to access areas, and a \$5,100 per capita income in

2011 may have been cut by 50%.

The Broader Sources of Regional Instability

Finally, no assessment of the broader trends affecting the Middle East or Gulf can ignore the structural problems and pressures highlighted by Arab Development reports ever since 2003. As events since 2011 have shown, these underlying pressures can explore into violence with only limited warning.

Critical levels of population pressure:

- The basic demographics for MENA region are a critical issue in a region that is largely a desert with declining aquifers, river flow and rain, and dependence on finite amounts of fossil water.
 - Total population about 83 million in 1950 according to US Census Bureau. Was 404 million in 2014 – roughly 5 times higher.
 - The rate of growth is dropping, but conservative estimates put the total at 590 million in 2050 – 7 times higher than in 1950 – and 46% higher than in 2014.
 - Life expectancy increased by roughly 12 years on an average from around 61 to 73, creating a new problem in supporting the elderly.
 - The dependency ratio is increasing because of both more elderly and t large percentages are under 14 years of age. Some 28-38% of the total MENA population is zero to 14 years of age, versus only 19.4% in US, 13.8% in Italy, and 13.2% in Japan.
 - Various studies indicate that the region and the Gulf have fallen far short of creating meaningful jobs for the “youth bulge” in even college educated men, and fallen dismally short in terms of productive jobs for women.

Poor Economics increase the pressures in many countries:

- There are massive variations in per capita income: The GDP per capita is \$2,500 in Yemen, \$6,000 in Jordan, \$6,600 in Egypt, \$7,000 in Algeria, \$7,100 in Iraq, \$12,800 in Iran, \$31,300 in Saudi Arabia, \$102,100 in Qatar - \$52,800 in US.
- Gross national income (GNI) per capita is equally different: Aggregate income of an economy generated by its production and its ownership of factors of production, less the incomes paid for the use of factors of production owned by the rest of the world, converted to international dollars using PPP rates, divided by midyear population. Only averages \$8,317 in 2013 for Arab world vs. \$33,391 for very high development countries, and \$12,243 Europe and Central Asia, even when Arab oil states are included.

- “Oil wealth” is often a serious misnomer. DOE/EIA estimates that that per capita oil wealth in OPEC states ranges from only \$1,667 in Algeria to \$2,706 in Iraq, \$8,939 in Saudi Arabia and \$40,943 in Qatar.
- Income distribution is often extremely poor, favoring elites and often excluding the young and pushing people out of their prior status in the middle class.
- The ability to afford housing, marriage, and children is a growing issue.
- Dead end jobs are a source of alienation compounded by disguised unemployment and dead end jobs in the government and state owned enterprises.
- Agriculture suffers from growing water problems, lack of economic reform and fact successful increases in output and value require increase investment and capitalization and few workers – driving many off the land in areas with fixed or declining arable land.

States and governments often fail their people

- World Bank governance indicators often show very poor performance in the quality of governance, corruption, transparency, violence, the rule of law and regulation over long, periods of time. The Ease of Doing Business indicators reveal similar problems in development.
- UN human development indicators often show serious problems and the region generally exhibit very slow improvement over time.
- Other pressures increase sectarian, ethnic, tribal, and regional tensions.
 - Hyperurbanization of formally rural societies is a critical case in point. As a rough estimate urbanization rose from 16-18% in 1950 to well over 40% today.
 - CIA *World Factbook* now estimates rate in Qatar is 98%, 73% in Algeria, 82.3% in Saudi Arabia, 82.7% in Jordan, 47% (?) in Jordan. Instability, increased population density, lack of traditional ties increase sectarian, ethnic, tribal tensions.
- Many countries underinvest in education, and have not modernized their education to increase relevance to employment and development.
 - UN data often warn that major shortfall exists between “required levels of education in years and actual. Sometimes below 50%.
 - UN estimates that the average expected years of schooling total 10.6 years and mean average of actual years is 6 not bad by South Asian and African standards, but compares with 10.4 in Europe.

Additional Factors

- The failure of states and clerics to engage effectively at the ideological and religious level.
- Internal tensions that create sectarian and ethnic tension and breed extremism.
- Impact of new media and methods communication.
- Lack of effective polling and efforts to determine causes of alienation and extremism.
- Focus on counterterrorism and repression to the exclusion of efforts to reintegrate and remove the causes of extremism. Abuses of human rights that encourage, rather than prevent, extremism.

Focusing on Facts, Numbers, and Substance

There are many uncertainties in the data I have used, and there never is only one way to count trends and quantify key data. At the same time, I would hope that my focus on facts and numbers illustrates the dangers in simply advancing political and policy positions and failing to assess and debate the facts.

Strategic dialogue cannot be meaningful if it is based on conspiracy theories, fixed policy positions, and perceptions that have never been seriously researched.

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