

We affirm:

Our Sole Contention is Reshaping Middle Eastern Relations

Before US intervention, **Hamidaddin '13 of King's College** explains that historically, despite being on the brink of war in the 1980s, Saudi Arabia and Iran have been able to build trust between the two countries, even agreeing to the Domestic Security Act of the 1990s.

Thankfully, in the face of decreased faith in the US' commitment, **Seligman '20 of Foreign Policy** writes that with its actions over the last six months since Iran started lashing out, the US has made it clear they will only respond only if US interests are threatened. **Northam '20 of NPR** confirms it has become very clear to Saudi leadership that the US does not have its back militarily.

Thus, **Luck '20 of the CSM** concludes that because Saudi Arabia is unable to trust the US security guarantee, they have concluded that the costs of militarization are too high and that the only path forward with Iran is diplomacy.

Critically, **Luck** continues that it was US military intervention that upended this opportunity for successful diplomacy.

Removing nearly all US military presence would catalyze peace in the region in 2 ways:

First is Allowing Chinese Leadership

Withdrawal allows a pivot to Asian diplomacy. **Janardhan '19 of the University of Exeter** writes that while ties between the GCC and Asia are growing, no actor could replace the US in the status quo. However, diminishing US presence in the region allows Asian countries to fill the gap.

Indeed, **Garlick '20 of Prague University of Economics** finds that less US involvement in the Persian Gulf would allow China to enhance their diplomatic efforts in the region.

Thus, **Su '19 of the LA Times** confirms that when the US steps back from the Gulf, China deepens political ties in the region.

Greer '19 of the Diplomat furthers that should the US allow China to step in, China is best positioned to de-escalate tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, as China has economic and political ties to both and Iran trusts China to be an honest broker, concluding that China could pull the two away from war.

Moreover, **Scita '20 of Durham University** writes that Saudi Arabia accepts China's supportive language towards Iran, concluding that because of the economic interdependence between the Gulf and China, China's balancing of powers is a stepping stone for future broader engagement.

Thus, **Janardhan** concludes that China's involvement is key for any future chance at Gulf-Iran de-escalation towards peace and stability, with any rapprochement developing each side into rivalry partners to avoid war.

Second is Allowing for Saudi-Iranian Peace

Iran wants to pursue diplomacy. **Jones '11 for Rutgers** explains that Iran has no interest in the destruction of Saudi Arabia or the Arab world's political order and that Iran's revolutionary imperative is in the past.

Indeed, **Zaccara '19 of Qatar University** writes that Iran has sought regional peace since the 1990s and recently introduced the HOPE initiative, including a Pan-Gulf non-aggression pact to prevent and resolve conflicts.

However, US presence disallows diplomacy.

Fassihi '19 of the New York Times writes that Iran will welcome negotiations with Saudi Arabia, but only if they prioritize regional peace over its relationship with the US, concluding that prospects for peace look bleak with the US around.

Indeed, **Barzegar '10 of Harvard** indicates that Iran's military maneuvers are adapted to heavy US military presence, but withdrawal would cause a switch in Iranian foreign policy, expanding regional cooperation and allowing for genuine reconciliation with neighbors.

Furthermore, **Freidman '14 of Stratfor** explicates that Iran is inherently a defensive country, but when American troops are on their border in Iraq, Iran is forced to prioritize their security over regional stability.

Ultimately, **Keynoush '20 of the Atlantic Council** concludes that if Riyadh and Tehran are caught up dealing with US interests in regional conflicts, they will drift apart when it comes to achieving the goal of stabilizing the region.

Even if peace agreements fail, **Mack '12 of Simon Fraser University** finds that the death toll of recurring conflicts decreases by 80%.

Cooperation is key to prevent further conflict

Goldenberg '17 of Foreign Policy explains that nearly every major conflict in the Middle East has included Iranian-Saudi competition.

Fisher '16 of the New York Times quantifies that the continuation of Iranian and Saudi competition in the Middle East would kill 5 million through decades of proxy wars.

Indeed, **the NRC '20** confirms that any escalation in regional conflict would be deadly for aid lifelines on the brink of collapse, putting 42 million aid-dependent civilians in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq at risk of death.

Thus, we affirm: