Middle East Instability Aff

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Position Explanation

Notes: This file answers contains answer to the middle east instability disadvantage. This file has some general uniqueness and link answers, which should be supplemented in any good 2ac with case specific link answers. The bigger focus of this file, however, is impact defense. You should select your impact defense cards based on reading the warrants in the Aff’s evidence which says conflict in the middle east will escalate.

No ME Stability

Mideast instability is inevitable now

Abdullah Al Shayji, Chairman of the Political Science Department, Kuwait University, 7-5-2010, “Middle East at crossroads of prosperity and instability,” http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/middle-east-at-crossroads-of-prosperity-and-instability-1.650123

The Middle East is witnessing major changes and shifts in the traditional status quo which is upsetting the power structure that has existed in the region for the last few decades. These upheavals have sparked fears that the region could descend into war and instability. The highly-charged atmosphere points to a chilling scenario of war sparked by sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme or a military strike by Israel. Tel Aviv has been massing warplanes and military hardware in the Caucasus, in particular Azerbaijan and Georgia. The US also keeps reminding everyone that all options are on the table with regard to Iran. The complete stagnation of the Middle East peace process which has bedeviled the US and unmasked its limited influence over the hardline Likud-led Israeli government is a worry. Washington's failure to steer the Middle East towards a more stable path is appalling. The US knows only too well the centrality of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its impact on all other crises and issues in the region. Squandering opportunities and caving in to limited interests and domestic pressure with the US mid-term election looming next November is pushing and pulling the region towards the abyss. There is the threat of Israeli military action against Hezbollah at the height of the US mid-term elections when the Obama administration will be hard-pressed to rein in Tel Aviv. It is ironic that while the US is fully aware of the significance of a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, it keeps failing to achieve that critical breakthrough.

Mideast instability is coming – Iraq withdrawal

Abdullah Al Shayji, Chairman of the Political Science Department, Kuwait University, 7-5-2010, “Middle East at crossroads of prosperity and instability,” http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/middle-east-at-crossroads-of-prosperity-and-instability-1.650123

Add to this the stalemated Iraqi political scene in a year when the US will start its long-awaited military withdrawal of its combat troops, a prelude to full military withdrawal by December 2011. Iraq's politicians, unfortunately, are posturing, horse-trading and jockeying for power and posts four months after the parliamentary election. With foreign powers, especially Iran, meddling in Iraqi affairs, the leading figure in the Iraqi National coalition and former Iraqi national security adviser Mowaffak Al Rubaie said that Iran is a major player in Iraq. In a revealing statement, he admitted that an Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards officer called Qasim Sulaimani is in charge of the Iraqi file and is calling the shots in Iraq. Meanwhile, political groups continue to lobby for power and posts to form the long overdue cabinet. The Iraqi political system continues to experience the pangs and pain of the transition to a normal state. The last failed state index put Iraq at number six out of 177 countries, a ranking Iraq has been holding on to for the past few years. Another survey, Mercer's 2010 Quality of Living Survey, which ranks 221 cities, with Vienna at the top, places Baghdad at the bottom of its list in terms of quality of life. Considering these ominous crises and challenges, along with the absence of any real breakthrough in any of the pressing issues, we are excused if we do not feel optimistic. We are at a critical crossroads in the region, we are even lucky if we could dodge any escalation or war.

A2: Withdrawal Causes Instability

U.S. disengagement causes EU fill in – that preserves stability

Leon T. Hadar, research fellow in foreign policy studies @ CATO, 8-20-2003, “Mending the U.S.-European Rift over the Middle East,” http://www.cato.org/pub\_display.php?pub\_id=1344

The long-term interests of the United States do not lie in dominating the Middle East and marginalizing the European role there. Instead, by taking steps to disengage from the Middle East, Washington could create incentives for the Europeans to adopt a posture in the region suitable for protecting and defending their legitimate interests there. A foreign policy that encourages greater engagement between Europe and the states of the Middle East could ultimately redound to the benefit of Europeans, Middle Easterners, and Americans alike.

U.S. withdrawal causes EU fill in

Leon T. Hadar, research fellow in foreign policy studies @ CATO, 8-20-2003, “Mending the U.S.-European Rift over the Middle East,” http://www.cato.org/pub\_display.php?pub\_id=1344

Indeed, the time has come for Washington to consider a long-term policy of “constructive disengagement” from the Middle East and to encourage the Europeans to take upon themselves the responsibility of securing their interests in the region. After all, the main rationale for military intervention in the Middle East during the Cold War was the need to help secure the strategic and economic interests of Western Europe (and Japan) as part of a strategy to contain the global threat of the Soviet Union. As noted above, America’s expanding presence in the Middle East came in response to the inability of the Europeans, with their eroding economic base and military power in the aftermath of World War II, to protect their interests in the region. Washington assumed the diplomatic, military, and financial burden almost entirely on its own because European (and Japanese) interests were deemed compatible with, if not identical to, American interests.

That preserves stability

Leon T. Hadar, research fellow in foreign policy studies @ CATO, 8-20-2003, “Mending the U.S.-European Rift over the Middle East,” http://www.cato.org/pub\_display.php?pub\_id=1344

By adopting a strategy of constructive engagement in the Middle East, the EU could try, through the use of both diplomatic and economic resources, to achieve the kind of goals that the Bush administration is trying to advance through the use of its military power: challenging the status quo in the Middle East while advancing the cause of peace and political and economic reform.

A2: U.S. Troops Solve Stability

U.S. military engagement in the middle east won’t solve stability – U.S. influence is ruined

Leon T. Hadar, research fellow in foreign policy studies @ CATO, 2-2-2009, “The Return of Realist Interventionism,” http://www.antiwar.com/hadar/?articleid=14175

Some hopes of progressive and libertarian antiwar activists were already dashed when Obama announced he would retain Robert Gates as defense secretary and nominate Hillary Clinton as secretary of state and retired Gen. James Jones as his national security adviser. The non-interventionists' mood was probably not improved after reading reports about the potential role that former Clinton administration aides like Martin Indyk, Dennis Ross, or Richard Holbrooke – known for their pro-interventionist approaches – might play in the administration. Indeed, those of us who were hoping, wishing, and praying for the making of a new U.S. foreign policy paradigm – one that would disengage militarily from the Middle East, end the special relationship with Israel, withdraw from NATO, terminate military pacts with Japan and South Korea, and take a less belligerent approach toward Russia – were bound to be disappointed by many of Obama's selections for his foreign policy team. But then Obama never stated that he would embrace the non-interventionist agendas of Taft Republicans or McGovern Democrats. President Bush père and President Clinton have been his role models when it comes to diplomacy and national security. And these two were both committed to maintaining the U.S.' dominant position in the post-Cold War era, including through the use of military force. It is true that neither Bush père nor Clinton embraced the more ambitious neoconservative policy proposals that called for invading countries in the Middle East and establishing a permanent U.S. military presence there. And while they and their aides occasionally employed Wilsonian rhetoric, they never had any urge to "liberate" Iraq and implant democracy in the Middle East. Theirs was a pragmatic – or opportunistic – foreign policy that took advantage of the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the only potential challenger of U.S. hegemony, as well as America's economic might, to establish a dominant U.S. position in the Middle East and East Asia, to expand NATO to the borders of Russia, and to continue calling the shots at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. Under them, Washington was able to maintain an American Empire whose military and economic costs were largely acceptable to the U.S. public. Obama, with the help of the Clintonites and the Scowcrofts, is hoping to recreate that kind of cost-effective Pax Americana. Applying diplomatic means to reach a "grand bargain" with Iran and to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process could permit the United States to withdraw its troops from Iraq and reassert its influence in the region. Creative statesmanship could also help reduce tensions in South Asia and create the conditions for stability in Afghanistan. Working more closely with the European Union (EU), the country could bargain and make deals with the Russians. And then there is America's "soft power," pumped-up by the sex appeal of Mr. Cosmopolitan Cool himself, which might win the hearts and minds of Muslims everywhere. Indeed, during his inaugural address, Obama seemed to reiterate the kind of internationalist and realist principles embraced by Bush père while avoiding any mention of an "axis of evil" or a "war on terrorism." Instead, he projected a mix of tough pragmatism and soft idealism. '"We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist," he said, sending a message to Iran, Syria, and other governments Bush II refused to engage and sought to isolate. And he specifically addressed the Muslim world, "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect." Two days after entering office, Obama announced that former Sen. George Mitchell would be his special envoy to the Middle East to help revive the Israeli-Palestinian process, and that former Clinton aide Richard Holbrooke would serve as his special envoy to South Asia. Obama's selection of the Lebanese-American Mitchell and not of Dennis Ross, an American-Jewish diplomat perceived as being one-sidedly sympathetic to Israel, was seen by some as an indication that Obama intends to embrace a more evenhanded approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Moreover, there is a rising expectation in Washington that Obama will use his charismatic and cosmopolitan persona, including his quasi-Muslim roots, to re-energize U.S. diplomatic influence and accentuate its commitment to be an honest broker in the Middle East. Obama and his skilled foreign policy advisers will demonstrate that Washington can now revive the dormant Israeli-Palestinian peace process, overcome the many obstacles to a political settlement, and help bring peace to the Holy Land. At least that's the way many in Washington and the media seem to see things. They insist that not before long, the Obama administration will bring stability and peace to Middle East (and South Asia and the Caucus and…) where supposedly everyone is waiting for the United States to exert its leadership role. If Obama builds America's "standing" in the world, they – the Israelis and Palestinians (and Indians and Pakistanis) – will come to the negotiation table and make peace. But once again, these high expectations may not be fulfilled. The problem is that the United States of 2009 has clearly lost its position as the Global Number One. It could find it very difficult to secure even the less ambitious goal of being first among equals. The debacle in Iraq coupled with the horrific costs of the financial crisis have eroded U.S. military and economic power, and, by extension, diplomatic influence. This change in the balance of power is driven to a large extent by growing public opposition to the Iraq War and to new military interventionism.

A2: U.S. Troops Solve Stability

Current military alliances in the middle east fail to create regional stability

Leon Hadar and Christopher Preble, Research Fellows @ CATO, 2008, http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-52.pdf

For many decades, successive U.S. administrations have defined U.S. national security interests in the Middle East as ensuring access to Middle East oil, containing any aspiring regional hegemonic powers, and limiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Washington has tried to achieve this complex set of goals primarily through a network of informal security alliances—especially with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Americans have also attempted to broker peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians; Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton both viewed resolution of the conflict as a central component of U.S. policy in the Middle East and attempted to expand the American role in the peace process on the assumption that a resolution of the conflict would reduce the appeal of anti-Americanism and contain the radical forces in the region. After 9/11, U.S. strategy in the Middle East changed dramatically. George W. Bush came into office intending to make a sharp break from his predecessors, and 9/11 facilitated a shift toward using military might to transform the balance of power in the region. The new administration will likely choose between Bush’s example, employing or threatening the use of force to topple obstreperous regimes, or else revert to the policies of his predecessors, cajoling and pleading with the region’s leaders to make peace. Given that neither approach has advanced U.S. security and yet has been very costly, the better option would be to chart an entirely new course.

Disengagement is the best option

Leon Hadar and Christopher Preble, Research Fellows @ CATO, 2008, http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-52.pdf

Reshaping U.S. policy in the Middle East would enhance American security and help alter the perception that U.S. policies are guided by double standards. Maintaining a frail balance among all of Washington’s commitments in the region is becoming ever more costly, dangerous, and unnecessary. Americans are paying a heavy price to sustain a U.S. military and political presence there. A change is long overdue.

A2: Iraq Withdrawal => Instability

The occupation prevents effective political compromise

Barbara K. **Bodine**, director of the Governance Initiative in the Middle East at the Kennedy School of Government, January/February 2006, Boston Review, http://bostonreview.net/BR31.1/bodine.html

Here Posen brings up a critical argument not heard nearly enough: that the U.S. occupation has an enabling effect on conditions in Iraq. The role of the occupation in fueling the insurgency and recruiting foreign fighters is clear, if not yet sufficiently accepted. Likewise, the function of the occupation in perpetuating political paralysis deserves more attention. None of the three major groups can defeat the other militarily, but each has the capacity to wreak havoc. Economically, none can realistically survive long without the others, if only because of pipelines and the perceptions of foreign investors. Politically, majoritarianism is as untenable as Baathism. But our occupation blunts the necessity for Iraqis to make the political choices necessary to survive. The Kurds are cocky from 15 years of U.S. patronage. The Shia are arrogant because of unrealistic promises of compensatory power, wealth, and influence. And the Sunnis have read U.S. policy, correctly, as marginalization of minority groups. There is no incentive to compromise in these calculations. But a stalemate doesn’t resolve anything. What is needed is a pragmatic compromise. The Iraqis pulled themselves back from a precipice in October with the grand bargain to open the constitution to immediate amendment in exchange for full Sunni participation in the political process. An explicit commitment by the United States to disengage militarily by a specific date could have a salutary effect on all the major players within Iraq. It is not just a hanging that can concentrate the mind.

U.S withdrawal creates an incentive for effective political transition and reconstruction

Gilbert **Achca**r, author of The Clash of Barbarisms and Eastern Cauldron, both published by Monthly Review Press, **and** Stephen R. **Shalom**, on the editorial board of New Politics, and the author of Imperial Alibis, 11-28-20**05**, http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=15&ItemID=9220

If Washington were to make clear that it wants to complete the withdrawal of its troops within a timetable stretching over weeks, or very few months, this would provide a very powerful incentive for the Iraqis to reach an agreement among themselves on a way to run their country together peacefully and start to concentrate their efforts on the huge task of its reconstruction. The consensus reached at the recent Cairo conference is an important step in that direction and proves that it is perfectly possible, and much easier indeed, to reach such agreements when U.S. representatives are not there constantly interfering and calling the shots.

Withdrawal leads to a de-escalation in violence and commitment to the political process

Edward **Luttwak**, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, January/February 20**05**, Foreign Affairs, http://www.comw.org/pda/fulltext/0512luttwak.pdf

Because Iraq is under foreign occupation, Islamic, nationalist, and pan-Arab sentiments currently prevail over denominational identities, inducing Sunni and Shiite Arabs to unite against the invaders. So long as Iraqis of all kinds believe that the United States has no intention of withdrawing, they can attack American forces to express their nationalism or Islamism without calculating the consequences for themselves of a post-American Iraq. That is why Moktada al-Sadr’s Shiite militia felt free to attack the U.S. troops that elsewhere were fighting Sunnis bent on restoring their ancestral supremacy, and why its actions were applauded by the clerics and the Shiite population at large. Yet if faced with the prospect of an imminent U.S. withdrawal, Shiite clerics and their followers would have to confront the equally imminent threat of the Baath loyalist and Sunni fighters—the only Iraqis with recent combat experience, and the least likely to accept Shiite clerical rule. That is why by moving to withdraw the United States could secure what the occupation has never had: the active support of its greatest beneficiaries, the Shiites. What Washington needs from them is a total cessation of violence against the coalition throughout Iraq, full cooperation with the interim government in the conduct of elections, and the suspension of all forms of support for other resisters. Given that there is already some acquiescence and even cooperation, this would not require a full reversal in Shiite attitudes.

A2: Iraq Withdrawal => Instability

Withdrawal doesn’t lead to an Islamist takeover

Brian **Katulis**, Director of Democracy and Public Diplomacy on the National Security Team at the Center for American Progress, 12-6-2005, http://www.americanprogress.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=biJRJ8OVF&b=839811&ct=1699357

During the past few months, President Bush and top officials in his administration have attempted to raise fears about the possibility of a radical Islamic empire based in Iraq if the United States leaves Iraq “too soon,” in the words of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. President Bush takes the stated aspirations of radical Sunni terrorists like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi at face value. But the chances for radical Sunni Islamist groups in Iraq taking control of Iraq are [next to nil](http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/us-conjures-up-iraqi-cataclysms-to-delay-retreat/2005/11/29/1133026464703.html) – Kurds and Shiites outnumber Sunnis four to one in Iraq, and Sunni groups lack weapons to capture and control large areas of Iraq. There is no chance for a broader radical Islamic empire stretching from Indonesia to Spain. The global Muslim community is too diverse to become unified under a single system, and [recent empirical research](http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=248) demonstrates rising concerns among Muslims about Islamic extremism. Furthermore, strong majorities of people in most Muslim-majority countries [express support for democracy](http://wvs.isr.umich.edu/papers/FornPol2.pdf). Rather than giving too much credence to the possibility of al Qaeda’s aspirations and raising illogical fears about a radical Islamic empire that has no chance of becoming a reality, President Bush should take real steps to advance democracy in Iraq, including [drawing down the U.S. military presence](http://www.newsday.com/news/opinion/ny-optak014533737dec01,0,1754438.story) to advance Iraq’s transition to democracy.

Withdrawal doesn’t lead to an Islamist government---U.S. troop presence doesn’t contribute to stability

Daniel **Benjamin**, senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 11-30-20**05**, Sydney Morning Herald, http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/us-conjures-up-iraqi-cataclysms-to-delay-retreat/2005/11/29/1133026464703.html

The suggestion that a jihadist takeover in Iraq would follow a US withdrawal verges on preposterous. It is the latest in a parade of straw men dispatched to scare up support for wrongheaded and failed policies. There is no question the jihadists would like to seize a country as a base for wider operations. But they have nowhere near the capacity to achieve this in Iraq. Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq and other radical Islamist groups have bloodied US forces, the fledgling Iraqi Government and the Shiite population. The jihadist organisations lack the heavy weapons and the manpower that would be required to seize control of Baghdad, to capture and hold large tracts of territory that are occupied by hostile Shiites and Kurds who outnumber Sunnis four to one, or to run the country. Only with the rapid influx of tens of thousands of fighters from outside Iraq could jihadists win control of the country. That scenario is farfetched. Make no mistake: much of western Iraq is and will remain a terrorist sanctuary. But neither US forces nor Shiite-dominated Iraqi military units will be able to do much about that against an enemy that has an excellent early-warning system. It will be years before an Iraqi intelligence service can root these networks out. The real threat is civil war. But here, too, it is not clear how much the US can do to prevent it. If the Shiites and Kurds do not ameliorate the grievances of Iraqi Sunnis, civil war is probable. Keeping US forces in Iraq in such circumstances would at best delay the inevitable.

Arab regimes would fill-in defraying the impact – none of their evidence assumes this.

Lt. General William E. **Odom**, U.S. Army (Ret.), senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a visiting professor at Georgetown University, was the director of the National Security Agency, Summer 20**04**, The National Interest, http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/odom\_national\_interest\_summer\_2004.pdf

In the region: So-called moderate Arab leaders are deeply conflicted. On the one hand, most of them are glad to see Saddam defeated. On the other hand, their own youth are being radicalized. We should not exaggerate what the so-called “Arab street” will do, but we should worry about where Arab oil money will end up and to what purposes it will be put. Looking back to (relatively) more sta- ble times in this region, we note that they were based on the United States having a firm foot in all camps—Israeli, Persian and Arab. When the Shah of Iran fell, the United States lost its footing in the Persian camp. To restore the balance required larger U.S. military force projec- tion capabilities. That prompted the creation of the rapid deployment force and the Central Command in 1979–81. The invasion of Iraq and the strong tilt to Sharon’s side in Israel endangers U.S. footing in the Arab camp. If it is lost, the resulting imbalance will require huge mil- itary power: Far greater land forces than the United States now possesses. These trends have so weakened the U.S. position in the region that it no longer makes sense to stay on the present course. Abandoning Iraq and accepting the consequences is the obvious way to slow the trends—if not to reverse them outright. Moreover, a U.S. pullout might galvanize the moderate Arab regimes themselves to try to control events within Iraq.

A2: ME War Escalates – General

A Mideast war would not escalate or go nuclear

Elizabeth Stevens, September 19, 2002, http://infomanage.com/nonproliferation/najournal/israelinucs.html

Thus far, Israel has confronted continuous hostility with a strong conventional superiority. It is doubtful that it would resort to a nuclear weapon given the fact that it could repel the attack of any one of its Arab opponents and probably a combination of them. Israel has signed a peace treaty with Egypt, and moderating forces in Jordan are strong. The recent peace treaty with the PLO and differences between Iraq and Syria further reduce the possibility of a united Arab attack. It would appear that Israel does not need a nuclear arsenal.

Middle East war won’t escalate

Professor **Li** Shaoxian, expert in the Middle East and a senior researcher in the Institute of Contemporary International Relations, 8-17-20**01**, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Aug/17671.htm

Although the situation in the Middle East is alarming, it will not start a war. The main reasons are: First, both the international community and international environment will not allow another Middle East war to break out. Peace and development is still the theme of today’s world. No big power wants to see a new war between Arab and Israel in this area so crucial to oil production. Second, war is not in line with the interests of several countries in the Middle East. None of the Israelis (including Sharon himself) wants war, because war would again put the very existence of the country in danger; Yasser Afrafat, as well, does not want war, because war would turn his 10 years peace efforts into nothing; Egypt and Syria, the other two big powers in Middle East, do not want war either. The president of Egypt Hosni Mubarak firmly rejected the possibility of war in an interview with Israeli TV. Bashar al-Assad, the new president of Syria, has put most his attention on domestic affairs. Third, the countries and extremists who do want to see war have neither the capablities or means for war.

A2: ME War Escalates – Russia

Russia is a moderate in the middle east-wants to avoid conflict

Sergey Ivanov Russian Defence Minister BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union “Russia's defence chief hopeful of compromise with Iran” 2/10/2006

Compared to the West, Moscow has always adopted a very moderate stance towards Iran. What position will it adopt in the event of a conflict? [Ivanov] Our moderate stance, as you call it, is wholly understandable. Political dialogue between Russia and Iran has always been very intense and it involves bilateral issues and common problems. I am thinking of the situations in Afghanistan, in Tajikistan, in the Caspian, in Iraq, and in the Middle East. And I am thinking also of our commercial and economic ties. For instance, our country is currently engaged in helping Iran with the construction of a nuclear power station in Bushehr. That said, we think that the problem must be settled strictly within the framework of the IAEA, because any attempt to call Iran to a show of strength could trigger an opposite, and probably irreversible, effect. It is important for us to maintain our economic ties with Iran, to keep the situation stable in the region, and not to allow a confrontation which could lead to a conflict.

Russia is on balance the most moderate international actor in the middle east

Jason Burke Et Al. The Observer “Focus: Middle East Crisis: The Road To War?” 7/16/2006

If there is, it will almost certainly involve the international community. Vladimir Putin, Russia's leader, had hoped to use this weekend's G8 summit to showcase the economic progress in his nation. Officially, education and the fight against HIV head the agenda, but attention has focused on the Middle East - and divisions between the summiteers. The splits echoed those over Iraq three years ago, with France's Jacques Chirac leading condemnation of the Israelis, European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso saying that the use of force by Israel was 'disproportionate', Putin calling for the Israeli response to be more 'balanced' and President Bush avoiding any condemnation of Israel, saying 'the best way to stop the violence is for Hizbollah to lay down its arms and to stop attacking.'

Russia won’t get involved—they don’t want conflict

Conor Sweeney The Irish Times “Russia urges talks with US as new cold war fears grow” 2/23/2007

Russia yesterday called for more dialogue with the US to cool recent tensions and speculation of a new cold war emerging between the former ideological foes. While senior officials from both administrations sought to play down their differences during talks in Moscow, the president Vladmimir Putin emphasised once again the importance of strengthening Russia's armed forces. It follows the surge of concern in the US at the series of increasing critical comments from the Kremlin, culminating in a recent speech by Mr Putin warning that Washington was imposing its will on the world with dangerous policies. "We do not consider President Putin's speech as an invitation to confrontation and do not think that his speech was intended that way," said US national security adviser Stephen Hadley, during a brief visit to Moscow, as he sought to talk down tensions. The list of Russian complaints against the US now stretches from plans for a radar missile shield across Europe, Nato's expansion eastwards, the toughening rhetoric against Iran, and the current independence plans for Kosovo. The US for its part has complained that Russia has been moving away from western democratic and human rights standards and has been using its energy resources as a political weapon with neighbours. Seeking to cool tensions and suggesting greater consultation with Moscow, the chief of the Russian security council, Igor Ivanov, said both former superpowers should work to ease conflicts. "It does not mean that our relations are cloudless. We have disagreements and misunderstandings, including in the sphere of security." However, there was no sign of any major shift in stance from either side yesterday in terms of content.

A2: ME War Escalates – Iraq

There’s no scenario of Iraq escalation

Kevin Drum Washington Monthly “A Provocation” 9/12/2007

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2007\_09/012050.php

Beyond that, though, there are the specifics of the MEIF scenario itself — and this is the part where I go to work without a net. Here's the nickel version of why I suspect an Iraqi civil war won't spread. The four neighbors that are most likely to get involved in a wider war are Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan, and Syria. Basically, I consider Saudi Arabia a paper tiger. They're militarily incompetent and will never get directly involved in Iraq, no matter how much the local Wahhabi imams rant about the persecution of Iraq's Sunni minority. Iran is more competent, but over the past 30 years they've never displayed any territorial ambitions. They prefer working through proxies. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran may provide some modest funding for their "side," but probably not much more. Jordan has no desire to get involved in any kind of war, and in any case we have a moderate amount of influence with King Abdullah. We can almost certainly keep Jordan from taking precipitate action as long as they don't feel too threatened. Syria is harder to predict, but they've got plenty of problems on their plate already. Besides, they've been making fairly consistently conciliatory noises lately, and as Eric Umansky reminds us, they actively tried to cooperate with us in the early days of the Iraq war until Donald Rumsfeld put the kibosh on them. Needless to say, no one can predict the future with any confidence, especially in a region as turbulent as the Middle East. And it's impossible to prove that a worst case scenario won't happen. Still, I think most of the regional players are more invested in stability than we give them credit for, especially if the United States takes a sane and energetic diplomatic approach to things. Saudi Arabia and Iran both want to keep their oil flowing, and both continue to keep bilateral talks plodding along. Syria will follow Iran's lead. Jordan will hunker down.

This argument is false political posturing

Kevin Drum Washington Monthly “A Provocation” 9/12/2007

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2007\_09/012050.php

My skepticism of the MEIF theory is mostly grounded in two things. First, it's a theory that gets an awful lot of uncritical acceptance without much in the way of actual detailed argument. That's always a bad sign. Second, worst case scenarios have a long history of being trotted out as a convenient way of forestalling unwanted action, and that's what seems to be happening in this case.

No escalation

Steven A. Cook Ray Takeyh. and Suzanne Maloney fellows at the Council on Foreign Relations senior fellow at Saban Center, Brookings Institution. 6/28/2007 http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/06/28/opinion/edtakeyh.php

The Middle East is a region both prone and accustomed to civil wars. But given its experience with ambiguous conflicts, the region has also developed an intuitive ability to contain its civil strife and prevent local conflicts from enveloping the entire Middle East. Iraq's civil war is the latest tragedy of this hapless region, but still a tragedy whose consequences are likely to be less severe than both supporters and opponents of Bush's war profess.

A2: ME War Escalates – Iraq

Empirically Denied

Steven A. Cook Ray Takeyh. and Suzanne Maloney fellows at the Council on Foreign Relations senior fellow at Saban Center, Brookings Institution. 6/28/2007 http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/06/28/opinion/edtakeyh.php

Finally, there is no precedent for Arab leaders to commit forces to conflicts in which they are not directly involved. The Iraqis and the Saudis did send small contingents to fight the Israelis in 1948 and 1967, but they were either ineffective or never made it. In the 1970s and 1980s, Arab countries other than Syria, which had a compelling interest in establishing its hegemony over Lebanon, never committed forces either to protect the Lebanese from the Israelis or from other Lebanese. The civil war in Lebanon was regarded as someone else's fight. Indeed, this is the way many leaders view the current situation in Iraq. To Cairo, Amman and Riyadh, the situation in Iraq is worrisome, but in the end it is an Iraqi and American fight.

Escalation is impossible—weak armies

Matthew Yglesias The Atlantic “Containing Iraq” 9/12/2007

http://matthewyglesias.theatlantic.com/archives/2007/09/containing\_iraq.php

Kevin Drum tries to throw some water on the "Middle East in Flames" theory holding that American withdrawal from Iraq will lead not only to a short-term intensification of fighting in Iraq, but also to some kind of broader regional conflagration. Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay, as usual sensible but several clicks to my right, also make this point briefly in Democracy: "Talk that Iraq’s troubles will trigger a regional war is overblown; none of the half-dozen civil wars the Middle East has witnessed over the past half-century led to a regional conflagration." Also worth mentioning in this context is the basic point that the Iranian and Syrian militaries just aren't able to conduct meaningful offensive military operations. The Saudi, Kuwait, and Jordanian militaries are even worse. The IDF has plenty of Arabs to fight closer to home. What you're looking at, realistically, is that our allies in Kurdistan might provide safe harbor to PKK guerillas, thus prompting our allies in Turkey to mount some cross-border military strikes against the PKK or possibly retaliatory ones against other Kurdish targets. This is a real problem, but it's obviously not a problem that's mitigated by having the US Army try to act as the Baghdad Police Department or sending US Marines to wander around the desert hunting a possibly mythical terrorist organization.

Won’t go global

Gwynne Dyer Queen's Quarterly “The coming war” December 2002 LN

All of this indicates an extremely dangerous situation, with many variables that are impossible to assess fully. But there is one comforting reality here: this will not become World War III. Not long ago, wars in the Middle East always went to the brink very quickly, with the Americans and Soviets deeply involved on opposite sides, bristling their nuclear weapons at one another. And for quite some time we lived on the brink of oblivion. But that is over. World War III has been cancelled, and I don't think we could pump it up again no matter how hard we tried. The connections that once tied Middle Eastern confrontations to a global confrontation involving tens of thousands of nuclear weapons have all been undone. The East-West Cold War is finished. The truly dangerous powers in the world today are the industrialized countries in general. We are the ones with the resources and the technology to churn out weapons of mass destruction like sausages. But the good news is: we are out of the business.

No regional escalation—empirically denied

Kevin Drum Washington Monthly “The Chaos Hawks” 9/9/2007

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2007\_09/012029.php

Having admitted, however, that the odds of a military success in Iraq are almost impossibly long, Chaos Hawks nonetheless insist that the U.S. military needs to stay in Iraq for the foreseeable future. Why? Because if we leave the entire Middle East will become a bloodbath. Sunni and Shiite will engage in mutual genocide, oil fields will go up in flames, fundamentalist parties will take over, and al-Qaeda will have a safe haven bigger than the entire continent of Europe. Needless to say, this is nonsense. Israel has fought war after war in the Middle East. Result: no regional conflagration. Iran and Iraq fought one of the bloodiest wars of the second half the 20th century. Result: no regional conflagration. The Soviets fought in Afghanistan and then withdrew. No regional conflagration. The U.S. fought the Gulf War and then left. No regional conflagration. Algeria fought an internal civil war for a decade. No regional conflagration.

A2: ME War Escalates – China

China won’t intervene-they gain too much

James Mann Washington Post “A Shining Model of Wealth Without Liberty” 5/20/2007

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/18/AR2007051801640.html

The Iraq war isn't over, but one thing's already clear: China won. As the United States has been bleeding popularity and influence around the world, China has been gaining both. That's largely because it has been coming into its own as the first full-blown alternative since the end of the Cold War to Washington's model of free markets and democracy. As the U.S. model has become tarnished, China's has gained new luster.

China won’t get involved—antithetical to their model, threatens their stability

James Mann Washington Post “A Shining Model of Wealth Without Liberty” 5/20/2007

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/18/AR2007051801640.html

The China model has emerged from the confluence of two independent developments over the past decade. Each stands on its own, yet the interaction between the two has been especially toxic for democratic values. First has been the failure of U.S. foreign policy, symbolized above all by the war in Iraq. Over the past decade, U.S. foreign policy has been dominated by a school of thought that emphasizes military power and has tied the spread of democracy to the use of force. Not only has this failed, it has also undermined support for democracy. U.S. attempts to export free markets and political liberty by force have been unable to bring even security, much less prosperity, to Iraq. And they've eroded our appeal and clout worldwide. The second key development has been the staying power and economic success of the Chinese Communist Party. In the years immediately after the crackdown on pro-democracy protesters around Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, Western pundits predicted that the Chinese government had one foot on a banana peel. Any day now, they said, it would fall or be forced to embrace far-reaching political reform to survive. Instead, China's economy expanded by a factor of nine, and the Communist Party remains firmly in control.

They profit too much to intervene

George McGovern Washington Post “Why I Believe Bush Must Go” 1/6/2008

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/04/AR2008010404308\_pf.html

In a more fundamental sense, American democracy has been derailed throughout the Bush-Cheney regime. The dominant commitment of the administration has been a murderous, illegal, nonsensical war against Iraq. That irresponsible venture has killed almost 4,000 Americans, left many times that number mentally or physically crippled, claimed the lives of an estimated 600,000 Iraqis (according to a careful October 2006 study from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health) and laid waste their country. The financial cost to the United States is now $250 million a day and is expected to exceed a total of $1 trillion, most of which we have borrowed from the Chinese and others as our national debt has now climbed above $9 trillion -- by far the highest in our national history.

China doesn’t care about Iraq—they want broad regional peace initiatives

Chietigj Bajpaee Power and Interest News Report Asia Times online “China stakes its Middle East claim” 3/14/2006 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HC14Ad01.html

In order to garner the goodwill of the region, Beijing has made numerous symbolic gestures. For example, in September 2002 Beijing appointed its first Middle East peace envoy. While this has had little significance for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, it has nevertheless demonstrated China's increasing attention to the region. Similarly, while China has maintained a low profile in the US intervention in Iraq, in May 2004 China submitted a document to the UN Security Council proposing that US-led forces withdraw from Iraq. China has also consistently called for a larger UN role in Iraq. China is deepening its economic cooperation with the region through the China-Arab Cooperation Forum and the Framework Agreement between China and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes negotiations for a free trade zone.

A2: ME War Escalates – China

China is not about international conflict—they favor stability and market access

Chietigj Bajpaee Power and Interest News Report Asia Times online “China stakes its Middle East claim” 3/14/2006 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HC14Ad01.html

However, events in these two regions are not mutually exclusive. China's growing economic influence has proceeded in tandem with a growing military capability and more proactive political and diplomatic policy on the world stage, including in the Middle East. Its policy toward the Middle East has emerged as a microcosm of its foreign policy throughout the world, being driven by a desire to maintain a stable international environment in order to focus on its internal development, forming a close bond with the developing world, gaining access to raw materials and markets, and elevating its status on the world stage.

No intervention—relationship with Israel

Chietigj Bajpaee Power and Interest News Report Asia Times online “China stakes its Middle East claim” 3/14/2006 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HC14Ad01.html

While China has maintained a historically close relationship with the Arab world, including sympathizing with the Palestinian cause, it has nevertheless also pursued an increasingly close relationship with Israel in recent years. Israel is one of only a handful of countries that has never granted diplomatic recognition to Taiwan. In recent years, Sino-Israeli relations have been fueled by China's growing dependence on Israel for arms imports and upgrades, particularly hard-to-find US-made weapons platforms. Israel is now China's second-largest supplier of weaponry after Russia. Most notably, Israel has sold China "Harpy" anti-radar drones and Python-3 air-to-air missiles.

China is non-interventionist

Chietigj Bajpaee Power and Interest News Report Asia Times online “China stakes its Middle East claim” 3/14/2006 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HC14Ad01.html

While the US has become more willing to engage in humanitarian intervention, preemptive action and regime change, with the Middle East emerging as the most likely candidate for the US to practice these policies, China retains a preference for a traditional Westphalian-style of conducting international relations with emphasis on non-intervention, state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

No war for oil—sources are diversified across the Middle East

Chietigj Bajpaee Power and Interest News Report Asia Times online “China stakes its Middle East claim” 3/14/2006 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HC14Ad01.html

With the end of the Cold War and China's emergence as a net oil importer in 1993, China's primary interest in the Middle East has been to gain access to the region's vast oil and gas supplies. While China is trying to diversify its energy import supplies, it still depends on the Middle East for half of its oil imports, with Saudi Arabia and Iran providing about 30% of China's oil imports. Meanwhile, numerous states in the region have agreed to invest in China's downstream infrastructure, as demonstrated in December when Kuwait signed an agreement to invest in refinery and petrochemical infrastructure in Guangdong province. Also in December, China and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) launched an energy dialogue. In fact, many recent diplomatic initiatives by China toward the Middle East can be seen through the prism of China's growing energy needs. For example, the visit by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz to China in January was the first by a Saudi monarch to China. This visit demonstrated the deepening relationship between the world's fastest growing source of oil demand (China) and the world's biggest oil supplier (Saudi Arabia). Since 2002, Saudi oil shipments to the US have been declining while shipments have been increasing to China. Indeed, last year Saudi Arabia was China's leading source of oil imports. China has secured numerous energy exploration agreements with the Saudi government. For example, Sinopec has won the right to explore for natural gas in Saudi Arabia's al-Khali Basin, while Saudi Arabia has agreed to assist China in the development of its strategic petroleum reserves and upgrade China's downstream refinery capacity as demonstrated by the construction of a refinery for natural gas in Fujian province.

A2: ME War Escalates – Shunni/Shia

Sunni-Shia tensions won’t escalate

Stratfor Analysts, future seers “What Prevents a Broad Sunni-Shiite Conflict” 7/27/2006

http://www.stratfor.com/what\_prevents\_broad\_sunni\_shiite\_conflict

Such remarks will contribute to an escalation of Middle Eastern sectarian tensions, which have simmered since the rise of the pro-Iranian Shia in Iraq. These tensions have been sharpened with the recent crisis in Lebanon. A number of factors make a regional Sunni-Shiite war unlikely in the region, however, contrary to the widespread belief that sectarian violence in Iraq could spill out beyond its borders. The tussle involving Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel has complicated the Sunni-Shiite divide. This dynamic will limit the ability of Iran to become a regional powerhouse, and will confine the Iranian-Arab struggle to the borders of Iraq.

There’s just no chance of Sunni-Shia war

Daily Times (Pakistan) “King Abdullah rules out regional sectarian conflict” 9/16/2006

KUWAIT CITY: Saudi King Abdullah ruled out in comments published in Kuwait Saturday the possibility of a sectarian war in the region between Sunnis and Shiites, Islam’s two main sects. “The Arab region will not witness wars between Muslims for any reason, whether sectarian or non-sectarian. No sect will dominate the other. Contrary to what some analyses say, this is totally ruled out,” King Abdullah said.

No risk of sectarian war—neither side wants it, empirically denied, no regional leaders

Stratfor Analysts, future seers “What Prevents a Broad Sunni-Shiite Conflict” 7/27/2006

http://www.stratfor.com/what\_prevents\_broad\_sunni\_shiite\_conflict

Relations between the Iranians and the Saudis have had their ups and downs — but even the killing by Saudi security forces of some 400 Iranian-backed Shiite pilgrims demonstrating during the Hajj in Mecca in the late 1980s did not spark a major conflict between the two. Ultimately, neither side wants to fight the other. This is because both Tehran and Riyadh know the structural limits they face with regard to taking each other on geopolitically. Each side knows the other wants its place in the region. Riyadh knows that Iran, and the Shia in the Arab world — especially those in Saudi Arabia’s oil-rich Eastern province — constitute a potential geopolitical threat that cannot be altogether neutralized, and hence requires management. Similarly, Iran knows it can go only so far in claiming the leadership mantle of the Arab and Muslim world because of its Persian and Shiite credentials, which mean Tehran will never be in a position to impose a settlement in the region.

No sectarian war—too busy hating Israel

Stratfor Analysts, future seers “What Prevents a Broad Sunni-Shiite Conflict” 7/27/2006

http://www.stratfor.com/what\_prevents\_broad\_sunni\_shiite\_conflict

For their part, the region’s Arab and Sunni Muslim masses are torn between fear of an emerging threat from the Shia and enmity with Israel. (Iran hopes to exploit the latter to its advantage.) The net result of the tension between these two perceptions does not seem to be moving in a direction favorable to Iran’s goals. Iran is trying to take advantage of the decision by Arab regimes to condemn Hezbollah by creating rifts between Arab governments and the masses, who are outraged by Israel’s actions. But being against one’s government is one thing, while being pro-Iranian is another.

Complex relations mean instability is contained in Iraq—no sectarian war

Stratfor Analysts, future seers “What Prevents a Broad Sunni-Shiite Conflict” 7/27/2006

http://www.stratfor.com/what\_prevents\_broad\_sunni\_shiite\_conflict

Ultimately, Iran faces considerable obstacles to its aim of becoming a regional powerhouse, and these very obstacles are also what prevent the eruption of a Sunni-Shiite war in the region. Each side — whether Iranian or Saudi, Sunni or Shia — has a great deal to lose from a Sunni-Shiite conflict on a regional scale. Thus, sectarian conflict will likely remain confined within the borders of Iraq.

A2: Contain Iran

Containment fails

Michael Rubin, Analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, November 2008, “Can a Nuclear Iran Be Contained or Deterred?,” AEI Online, http://www.aei.org/outlook/28896

Too much reliance on containment should worry U.S. policymakers, given the mixed assessments of previous incarnations of the policy at a time when the Islamic Republic was only a conventional power. The first concerted U.S. containment policy against the Islamic Revolution was initiated in 1993 when, in the face of both Iranian and Iraqi attempts to subvert stability and the regional status quo, the Clinton administration launched its dual containment strategy. "So long as we can rely on our regional allies--Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council], and Turkey--to preserve the balance of power in our favor in the wider Middle East region, we will have the means to counter both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes," Martin Indyk, then-senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs at the National Security Council, explained in 1993. He conceded, however, that containing Iran would be more difficult than restraining Iraq. "When we assess Iranian intentions and capabilities, we see a dangerous combination for Western interests," Indyk explained, citing Tehran's support for terrorism, its violent opposition to the Middle East peace process, its attempts to subvert friendly Arab governments, its desire to dominate the Persian Gulf through military means, and its clandestine nuclear weapons program.[31]

Iran is not contained now – U.S. must disengage from the middle east

Leon T. Hadar, research fellow in foreign policy studies @ CATO, 2-2-2009, “The Return of Realist Interventionism,” http://www.antiwar.com/hadar/?articleid=14175

The country's diminished leverage is also demonstrated in the failure to contain Iran's rising power and growing influence through surrogates in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine. Notwithstanding strong opposition from the Bush administration, Israel decided to open negotiations with Syria while Lebanon invited Hezbollah to join the government. Moreover, the Europeans and the Egyptians – not the Americans – played the leading role in achieving a cease-fire during the recent Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. If Washington could not get an Israeli-Palestinian peace process going at the height of the 2000 "Unipolar Moment" – when the Israelis and the Palestinians were less radicalized and led by strong and moderate leaderships – there is little reason to expect President Obama will become an instant Holy Land peacemaker. With a worn-out military and an economy in a downturn trajectory, Obama and the rest of Washington will be forced to recognize this reality, sooner or later. But the process of a great power adjusting to changes in the balance of power tends to be long and painful. Economists have drawn attention to the time lag between when an actual economic shock (such as a sudden boom or bust) occurs and when it is recognized by economists, central bankers, and the government. The existence of this time lag – or, to use the economic term, recognition lag – explains why, for example, it has taken economists so long to signal the current economic recession.. One can identify a similar lag between the time when an international crisis, like a military conflict, takes placeand the time when officials, pundits, and the public recognize its effect on the global balance of power. Hence, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, which devastated the military and economic power of the two leading empires, Great Britain and France, it was still common for officials and journalists to refer to these declining nation-states as Great Powers. The same kind of lag can be observed in the way officials and pundits have failed to recognize the combined impact of the Iraq War and the financial crisis have had on America's long-term standing in the international system. There is a tendency in Washington to attribute its declining influence to the Bush administration's mismanagement of U.S. diplomacy and national security policy. But even the most visionary and competent U.S. president will be constrained in his ability to "do something" whenever an international crisis takes place or to create incentives for global and regional players to work with it. Will Iran be interested in playing diplomatic ball with the U.S.? Will the Europeans continue to follow U.S. leadership or will they try to make separate deals with Russia? China and India are climbing up the economic and military ladder just as America seems to be stepping down. Realpolitik in the Obama Age could prove to be a painful cost-cutting exercise as Washington readjusts to the realities of the post-neoconservative era. In that case, imperial retrenchment could prove to be the default choice of the new president.