



U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Strategic Goals, Oil Interests, and the Promotion of Democracy

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Abstract

This research explores U.S. intervention's historical and contemporary role in the Middle East, focusing on oil interests, political strategies, and regional stability. The study examines key agreements like the "fifty-fifty" profit-sharing deal in Saudi Arabia and the broader implications of U.S. involvement in Gulf politics. The strategic importance of oil to U.S. national security is a central theme, illustrating how energy concerns have shaped U.S. foreign policy in the region. A significant portion of the research delves into the tension between promoting democracy and securing U.S. strategic interests, highlighting the challenges faced in balancing these often conflicting goals. Methodologically, the research utilizes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, drawing on historical documents, diplomatic records, and contemporary analyses. The findings suggest that while the U.S. has made efforts to foster democratic reforms in the region, its interventions—such as the Iraq invasion—have often resulted in instability, sectarian violence, and the resurgence of authoritarian regimes. The research argues that the U.S. has maintained a strong presence in the Middle East primarily to safeguard its economic and security interests, understanding that the region is vital to both its energy supply and broader geopolitical strategy. The conclusion underscores that U.S. involvement in the Middle East will likely continue, driven by the desire to secure energy resources, maintain regional influence, and counter rivals like Iran, China, and Russia. The research suggests that while U.S. efforts to promote democracy have been largely unsuccessful, its strategic interests will remain dominant in shaping its regional policies.

Keywords: Goals, Policies, United States, Oil, Democracy, Middle East

Introduction

This research aims to clarify the objectives and policies of the United States regarding oil, the promotion of democracy, and political issues in the Middle East. The goal is to provide a clear understanding of the U.S. presence in the region, the reasons behind the fall of the Iraqi

government in 2003, and the current security challenges in the Middle East while also outlining America's strategic plans in the region within the framework of academic inquiry.

Some other studies have also been conducted on this topic, some of which are as follows

Economic losses may occur during the adjustment phase. Today, only a handful of scenarios pose a genuine threat to American energy security: the seizure of oil fields in the Middle East by a single nation, the blockage of crucial transit routes, or a civil conflict within Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer. The likelihood of the first scenario is extremely low, especially considering the conventional military limitations of most regional powers. While the second and third scenarios are also improbable, neither could be easily deterred by a substantial US military presence. Regarding transit routes, analysts generally concur that although Iran has the capability to disrupt shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, a small residual force would suffice to prevent such actions (Ashford, 2018).

The Middle East has been a focal point of the United States for decades, with its influence growing notably since the end of the Cold War. During that era, the region's oil resources, along with governments leaning towards communism, became a battleground in the geopolitical struggle between the US and the Soviet Union. By the 1990s, the US bolstered its military footprint in the area as a means of containing the regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the clerical rule in Iran (M. Khidhir, 2021).

American leaders have articulated a spectrum of crucial (and sometimes less crucial) interests in the Middle East. These have fluctuated with different administrations and historical periods but have consistently encompassed ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil and safeguarding the security of Israel. The United States has also voiced a firm commitment to forestalling any further nuclear proliferation in the Middle East (Byman & Moller, 2016).

During Clinton's presidency, as part of liberal internationalism, the United States backed democratization efforts in the Arab world, including some Gulf States. However, it didn't prioritize the preservation of America's strategic interests, particularly those related to security and oil in the region. The U.S. continued to collaborate with authoritarian regimes like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In essence, power considerations outweighed identity concerns. As for the Bush administration, while there were some discrepancies, there wasn't a significant departure from this policy. For instance, the administration advocated for the overthrow of Saddam's regime and, ultimately, the establishment of a democratic government in Iraq (İ. Erdem, 2004).

Recent years have seen the Middle East rocked by turmoil, marked by escalating violence and instability stemming from the Arab Spring uprisings and the proliferation of Islamist organizations espousing strong anti-Western sentiments. Most Middle Eastern countries pose a significant challenge to the United States and require a thorough cost-benefit analysis. Following the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, there was little justification for the extensive military investment or previous claims about Saddam Hussein possessing weapons of mass destruction. Despite the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the region remains critically important for global security (Fang & Lu, 2021).

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U.S. leaders' hopes to reallocate resources away from the challenges of military involvement in the Middle East to focus on other priorities or regions of higher strategic significance have often been hindered by ongoing regional instability and conflict. This pattern is anticipated to continue (P. Mueller, Wasser, Martini, & Watts, 2017).

The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the complex and evolving relationship between the United States and the Middle East, with a particular emphasis on the economic, geopolitical, and security dimensions of U.S. involvement in the region, particularly concerning oil. This study aims to analyze the historical development of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, focusing on how oil-driven economic interests and strategic objectives have shaped American engagement in the region. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate the impact of U.S. military interventions on regional stability, examining both the immediate and long-term consequences for the political landscape of Middle Eastern countries. A key objective is to explore the effectiveness of U.S. democratization initiatives, such as the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and assess how these efforts align with broader geopolitical goals. Moreover, the research will investigate U.S. foreign policy's socio-economic and political repercussions, particularly in Saudi Arabia, in the context of its Vision 2030 reforms. Finally, the study will identify significant trends and shifts in U.S.-Middle East relations, considering their broader implications for global oil markets and international stability. By achieving these objectives, the research will provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics shaping U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and its lasting impact on regional and global affairs.

Problem statements

The U.S. has long been engaged in the Middle East, driven by its strategic interests, particularly oil, and its broader geopolitical objectives. While U.S. involvement has been essential in securing access to the region's oil resources, it has also prompted interventions aimed at promoting democratic reforms. However, the effectiveness of these efforts has been highly contested, with many interventions, such as the Iraq War, resulting in instability, sectarian conflict, and the resurgence of authoritarian regimes. Despite the economic and security benefits the U.S. gains from the region, its policies often contradict its democratic ideals, creating tension between securing oil and fostering democratic governance. This research aims to explore the complexities of U.S. intervention in the Middle East, focusing on the interplay between oil interests, political strategies, and the promotion of democracy. It seeks to understand how these factors influence the region's stability and the long-term consequences of U.S. policies in the Middle East.

Literature Review

The U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East has been the subject of extensive scholarly analysis, focusing on its strategic goals, economic interests, and ideological pursuits. A key theme in the literature is the significance of oil in shaping American policies. Scholars like Yergin (1991) have argued that the U.S. has consistently prioritized energy security, with oil being a cornerstone of its geopolitical strategy. Agreements such as the Aramco concessions

and the “fifty-fifty” profit-sharing model in Saudi Arabia are frequently cited as pivotal moments that solidified U.S. influence in the region (Mitchell, 2011).

Another body of research examines the U.S. approach to democratization in the Middle East. Authors like Brownlee (2012) highlight the inherent contradictions in American foreign policy, which often balances support for authoritarian regimes with rhetorical commitments to democratic reform. For instance, while the U.S. promoted democratization initiatives during the Arab Spring, it simultaneously maintained strong alliances with Gulf monarchies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, reflecting a preference for stability over genuine political transformation (Ottaway & Carothers, 2004).

The U.S. military interventions in the region, particularly the Iraq War, are central to discussions about the consequences of American policies. Scholars such as Dodge (2014) argue that the invasion of Iraq, ostensibly aimed at promoting democracy, led to profound instability, including sectarian conflict and the resurgence of extremist groups. This aligns with Byman and Moller (2016), who assert that U.S. efforts to impose Western-style governance structures often fail due to a lack of understanding of local political and cultural dynamics.

The economic and political challenges posed by rival powers, such as Iran, China, and Russia, are also widely explored. Gholz and Press (2018) discuss how the U.S. has used its military presence in the Gulf to counter these actors, particularly in protecting vital transit routes like the Strait of Hormuz. However, Ashford (2018) argues that the heavy military footprint has not always translated into effective deterrence or stability.

Recent studies focus on the implications of Vision 2030 reforms in Saudi Arabia, analyzing the U.S. role in supporting these socio-economic transitions while safeguarding its strategic interests (Khidhir, 2021). The literature thus reveals a complex interplay of objectives, often marked by contradictions between ideals and practical considerations.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on the analysis of secondary data from reputable sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government publications, and policy reports. The study explores the historical and geopolitical dimensions of U.S. involvement in the Middle East, with a particular emphasis on oil, democratization efforts, and the broader strategic interests driving American foreign policy in the region.

A content analysis methodology is utilized to achieve a comprehensive understanding, allowing for an in-depth examination of documents and literature. Sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and alignment with the research objectives. Key themes analyzed include the economic importance of oil, U.S. military interventions, political democratization efforts, and the socio-political consequences of these strategies on Middle Eastern nations.

The research adopts a comparative approach, examining shifts in U.S. foreign policy across different periods, particularly pre- and post-Cold War eras, and in response to global

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energy transitions. This approach highlights the evolving nature of U.S.-Middle East relations, shedding light on the interplay between economic and political objectives.

Data triangulation was employed by cross-referencing findings from multiple sources to ensure validity and reliability. Historical data on oil agreements, such as the establishment of Aramco and the fifty-fifty profit-sharing principle, were compared with contemporary policy documents and scholarly analyses of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

Result/Findings

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1.1 The United States and Middle Eastern Oil

In 1950, Saudi Arabia negotiated with Aramco and agreed to implement a new principle in government-company relations aimed at addressing economic disparities between the two parties—the government and the foreign company. This agreement introduced the “fifty-fifty” profit-sharing principle, stipulating that the Saudi government would receive 50 percent of the company's profits. Aramco (Arab-American Oil Company) agreed to share oil revenues with the Saudi government after pressure from the Saudi government. Aramco itself emerged from a 1933 agreement between Saudi Arabia and the California-based oil company SoCal.

Such agreements typically granted foreign oil companies exclusive rights to extract oil within Saudi Arabian territory. The adoption of the fifty-fifty agreement was driven by national considerations in countries like Saudi Arabia, which sought to ensure a fair distribution of financial returns from foreign investors (Arayssi, 2020).

In 1948, responding to American demands, several companies were established to exploit petroleum. The Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) was formed by Esso (now Exxon), Texaco, Standard Oil of California (SoCal), and Mobil, all created specifically to develop concessions in Saudi Arabia. These companies quickly assessed and developed extensive production fields, enabling them to generate substantial profits from inexpensive oil. These profits were instrumental in reconstructing the economies of Europe and Japan, which had been devastated during World War II. The resulting economic boom also brought plentiful, low-cost oil to American shores, catalyzing growth in the post-war American economy. This success further fueled the desire among US companies to secure concessions in Kuwait, Iran, and other oil-producing nations in the region (S. Al Sarhan, 2017).

In the late twentieth century, the United States' approach to oil and the Persian Gulf reflected both its status as a superpower and the limitations of its power. Initially, the U.S. sought to strengthen and empower surrogate nations and client states in the Gulf that would act in accordance with American interests. However, this strategy ultimately became a pathway for more direct displays of American military strength. Jimmy Carter's 1980 State of the Union address, in which he declared that the U.S. would use “any means necessary, including military force,” to protect its “vital interests” in the Gulf, has clearly been realized (Jones, 2012).

Since the first modern “oil crisis” of the 1970s, a primary concern for U.S. national security has been ensuring reliable access to energy supplies in sufficient quantities and at affordable prices. The economic disruptions caused by the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the Arab oil embargo strengthened the view of oil as a crucial strategic resource essential to both the prosperity and security of the United States. Over the past two decades, the U.S. has engaged in multiple wars to maintain access to oil in the MENA region. The reversal of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1991 was partly justified as a defense of global access to oil, with the U.S. positioned as the ultimate guarantor of international energy security. As former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley from New Jersey stated, “The oil war that started in 2003 had cost us about \$400 billion by the end of 2006, with no end in sight (Momayezi & R. B. Rosenberg , 2011).

American assurances to Saudi Arabia and Israel remain intact, yet their current implications are ambiguous. Israel does not require direct U.S. intervention except in the most extreme scenarios of attrition warfare. Regarding Saudi Arabia, the guarantee provided by the U.S. and fulfilled during Desert Storm was under markedly different circumstances. Given the current state of oil prices and supply, it is uncertain what value that guarantee holds now (Mossalanejad).

President Trump asked a question on the fundamental principles of long-standing US energy policies in the region. As a candidate, he argued that the United States should have seized ownership of Iraqi oil: “It used to be that to the victor belong the spoils. Now, there was no victor there. But I always said, take the oil.” Once in office, he reportedly proposed this to the Iraqi Prime Minister, much to the dismay of the administration’s policy experts (F. Wechsler, 2010).

During Libya’s pro-democracy violent uprising against Muammar Gaddafi, the U.S. and its European allies, driven by national interests (such as ensuring free access to Libya’s vast oil reserves at favorable prices), viewed the rebellion as an opportunity to advance their long-standing goal of regime change against the nationalist, anti-Western, and radical Gaddafi, whose country had been experiencing rapid economic growth and rising per capita income. Using Niccolò Machiavelli’s concept of the “Fox” and the “Lion,” the U.S. secured a U.N. resolution through U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice for the “protection of civilians” from the conflict between Gaddafi’s forces and the anti-Gaddafi rebels (Eze R. C. , 2015).

The primary American interest in the Persian Gulf continues to be the unrestricted flow of oil and natural gas. It is indeed true that the United States now imports less oil from the region compared to the recent past, thanks to the fracking revolution and its impact on American energy production.

However, America’s demand for Persian Gulf oil has always been limited. What matters is the Gulf’s position in the global oil market. Disruptions there can significantly decrease global oil production, leading to immediate price fluctuations across world markets (Gause, III, 2019).

The global energy map is undergoing significant changes, primarily due to the oil and gas production surge in the United States facilitated by advanced technologies. This shift is expected to decrease reliance on Middle Eastern oil, thereby reducing dependence on oil-

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producing states compared to the past (especially considering the United States no longer depends on imports of natural gas and coal). Over the past four years, US oil production has increased by 25 percent. Furthermore, the International Energy Agency (IEA) anticipates that the United States will surpass both Russia and Saudi Arabia to become the world's largest oil producer.

The United States maintains unique relationships with the Gulf states and has a historical presence there. These connections are shaped by factors beyond just energy needs and access to the Gulf economy, necessitating an American presence there (Guzansky, 2013).

The energy revolution occurring in the United States sparked widespread debate about reducing dependency on oil imports, especially those from the Middle East. In addition to the economic benefits brought by the oil industry, such as the creation of approximately 135,000 jobs, many believed that shifts in the American energy market were the key factors behind the United States strained relations with major oil-producing countries like Saudi Arabia, the largest oil producer, and Egypt, a crucial transit hub for the movement of goods between East and West (Mann, 2017).

1.2 America's effort to promote democracy in the Middle East

The deficiencies in democracy in Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait) have been completely ignored in American political and media discourse. This omission can be attributed to the strong ties between these authoritarian regimes and the United States government, as these countries are the largest oil suppliers globally, especially to the United States. Consequently, victims of state violence in Gulf countries, who are largely ignored, contrast sharply with the attention and discussions in American media regarding similar issues in countries considered adversaries, such as Iran. In essence, media coverage across the United States has failed to address political situations and the advancement of democracy in America's allied nations, instead focusing on human rights violations in perceived enemy states (Al Sharafat, 2020).

The establishment of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in December 2002 advanced the United States' agenda for democratization. When the program was launched, Powell stated, "Any approach to the Middle East that overlooks its political, economic, and educational underdevelopment will be built on sand." MEPI sought to drive change by funding pilot projects, such as an election assistance program in Jordan and a program to monitor parliamentary elections in Yemen. The willingness of governments to accept such funding indicated their genuine readiness to promote the progress of their democracies. This shift moved away from traditional government-to-government aid programs and instead focused on providing smaller grants to smaller NGOs. Despite some critics arguing that the U.S. is fixated on electoral democracy rather than liberal democracy, MEPI's list of grantees highlights its focus on civil society, judicial and media reform, and empowering women through enfranchisement.

A significant portion of the MEPI budget went toward political programs designed to strengthen democratic processes, create or expand public spaces for vital democratic discussions, reinforce the role of free media, and promote the rule of law to ensure government

accountability. The U.S. State Department tailored these programs to meet both local needs and the practical realities on the ground. For instance, it brought student leaders from countries such as Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, and Saudi Arabia to universities like Purdue, Notre Dame, George Washington University, and the University of Delaware. It also supported parliamentary training in Morocco for newly-elected politicians as that country's political system began to open up to regional efforts for judicial and legal reform (Craner, 2006).

Several important caveats accompanied the broad liberal strategy endorsed by the Bush administration. Senior officials from the Bush administration quickly moved to dismiss any suggestions that a rift had developed with long-standing allies like Saudi Arabia and Egypt following the launch of the MEPI. They argued that the promotion of democracy was to be pursued in "partnership" and intended to provide "positive reinforcement for emerging reform trends" (Oz Hassan, 2011).

Recent events in the Middle East have astonished both observers and policymakers around the world. These developments present both challenges and opportunities for various international players, including the United States. A popular uprising has begun in response to dictatorships and repressive regimes in the Middle East and North Africa that have been supported by the U.S. (Latif & Abbas).

Reform proposals in Egypt have typically been superficial, mostly funneled through the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), and often driven by the government's desire to appear responsive to external pressures, particularly from the United States, to implement reforms. However, President Mubarak's unexpected announcement in late February, which called for presidential elections with multiple candidates, is noteworthy (Yacoubian, May 2005).

However, during the coup on July 3, 2013, in Egypt, a vicious cycle emerged regarding democracy. The violent and bloody political climate led to political instability, which in turn resulted in economic stagnation (Gör & KURUN, 2015).

The first elections following the military coup were held in May 2014, where the coup leader, Al-Sisi, was elected as Egypt's new president with 96.9% of the votes. Such an unusually high result made many observers label the elections unjust.

The military leadership urged all other candidates to reassess their electoral aspirations and step down. Another criticism was the use of state resources and media to back Al-Sisi's candidacy. Furthermore, other reports mention instances of voter intimidation and vote-buying (Ziegenhain & Enkhtaivan, 2024).

In the lead-up to the war, it was particularly revealing to observe the actions of prominent advocates within the Bush administration who were pushing for the "democratization" of Iraq. They attempted to pressure a Turkish government, which had recently received an overwhelming mandate in elections, to act against the clear will of the vast majority of its population and agree to American demands to use Turkish territory as a military base for the Iraq war. One "administration official" vented, saying, "The Turks seem to think we'll keep the bazaar open all night." Their frustration was inappropriate and perhaps revealed

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how superficial their commitment to democracy was, especially when Turkish leaders hesitated to comply with U.S. demands, given that polls showed up to 95 percent of the Turkish population opposed the war in Iraq (Khalidi , 2004).

The strategic failures in Iraq, Palestine, and other areas have caused both policymakers and American commentators to move away from the Bush administration's earlier emphasis on regime change as a catalyst for an Arab democratic spring. While these commentators generally acknowledge the good intentions behind promoting democracy, they share the concern of U.S. officials that merely supporting elections tends to lead to greater instability and violence rather than reducing it (BÂLI & RANA , 2010).

As part of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has implemented a series of social and economic reforms. Socially, the influence of the religious police has been diminished, women have gained the right to drive, and cinemas and theaters have been reopened. Economically, new policies have been introduced to reduce unemployment, including restrictions on certain jobs for citizens and an increase in the required percentage of Saudis that companies must hire. To curb public spending, subsidies for electricity and water have been reduced, along with cuts to the costs of infrastructure projects (Elbanna , 2023).

Based on Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, the country has taken several steps to institutionalize democracy in Saudi Arabia. For example, the following concerts

Mariah Carey delivered a performance, sharing the stage with Sean Paul and DJ Tiesto. In spite of receiving significant criticism, she stated that this was an opportunity to contribute to the advancement of gender equality in Saudi Arabia.

Her public relations team commented: "As the first female international artist to perform in Saudi Arabia, Mariah understands the cultural importance of this moment and will continue to advocate for global initiatives aimed at equality for all (Pandey, 2019).

Jennifer Lopez received a variety of reactions when she performed at the Elie Saab fashion show in Saudi Arabia. While many praised the country for its growing progressive attitude, others argued that such clothing was only acceptable for tourists and temporary "performers" visiting the nation (Jennifer Lopez performs in plunging fringe bodysuit at Riyadh event, netizens slam 'double standards' in Saudi Arabia, 16 Nov 2024).

Discussion

The United States' engagement in the Middle East has historically been driven by economic interests, particularly oil-related and geopolitical considerations. The region's vast oil reserves have long been viewed as crucial to the stability of the global energy market, and the U.S. has made concerted efforts to secure access to these resources. Since the establishment of Aramco in 1933, a significant American investment in Saudi Arabian oil, the U.S. has built a deep economic and political relationship with Middle Eastern countries (Jones, 2012). This relationship was cemented further by the implementation of the fifty-fifty profit-sharing

principle in Saudi Arabia in 1950, which allowed the U.S. to maintain a stable oil supply while generating substantial revenue for both nations (Wechsler, 2010).

The economic importance of oil became even more pronounced following World War II, as the U.S. emerged as a global superpower. Middle Eastern oil was pivotal to sustaining America's economic growth and maintaining its influence in the global arena (Byman & Moller, 2016). In this context, American foreign policy was heavily influenced by the need to secure energy resources, often at the expense of other concerns such as human rights and democratization (Erdem, 2004). While the U.S. sought to promote political stability in the region, its interventions, including military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, have been criticized for exacerbating regional instability and undermining efforts for democratic reforms (Ashford, 2018).

The relationship between the U.S. and the Middle East has evolved over the decades, especially in the wake of significant geopolitical shifts. For example, the oil crisis of the 1970s led to a reevaluation of U.S. energy policy and marked the beginning of efforts to reduce dependency on Middle Eastern oil (Mossalanejad & Rosenberg, 2011). However, despite the rise of alternative energy sources and the U.S.'s increased domestic oil production in recent years, the Middle East remains a region of strategic importance due to its role in global oil markets and its geopolitical significance (Fang & Lu, 2021).

The U.S. has also engaged in promoting democratization in the Middle East, yet these efforts have been met with mixed results. Initiatives like the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) sought to promote democratic values and reform in the region. However, these efforts have often been sidelined by the geopolitical imperatives of securing oil and regional stability, with the U.S. prioritizing relationships with authoritarian regimes that align with its strategic interests (Guzansky, 2013). The mixed success of these democratization efforts highlights the challenges the U.S. faces in balancing its economic, security, and political objectives in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to diversify the economy and reduce its dependence on oil, represents a potential shift in the region's political and economic landscape (Elbanna, 2023). As the Middle East transitions into a new era, the future of U.S.-Middle East relations will likely be shaped by both the region's economic transformations and the changing dynamics of global oil markets. The U.S. will need to adapt its strategies to navigate these shifts while continuing to maintain influence in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the United States' involvement in the Middle East, particularly in relation to oil, has been shaped by both economic interests and geopolitical strategies. From establishing Aramco in 1933 to implementing the fifty-fifty profit-sharing principle in Saudi Arabia in 1950, the U.S. has been deeply integrated into the region's oil economy. The economic importance of oil in the post-WWII period helped fuel U.S. growth and strengthened its position as a global superpower. However, the Middle East's oil reserves have been crucial

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for American economic prosperity and national security, as demonstrated by U.S. military interventions to safeguard access to oil.

While the U.S. has reduced its reliance on Middle Eastern oil in recent years due to advances in energy production, the region remains strategically important. Disruptions in oil supply can have significant global consequences, affecting global oil prices and stability. The U.S.'s relationships with Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, have been largely defined by these energy interests, often sidelining issues such as democracy and human rights in these nations.

The U.S. has also engaged in promoting democratization in the region, as seen with initiatives like the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), although these efforts have been met with mixed results. Despite such efforts, political instability and the persistence of authoritarian regimes continue to dominate the region. The U.S. has been forced to balance its advocacy for democratic reforms with the realities of strategic interests, often choosing stability over political change.

As Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 unfolds, it attempts to diversify its economy and introduce social reforms, signaling potential shifts in its internal dynamics. However, the future of U.S.-Middle East relations remains uncertain, as geopolitical shifts, economic transformations, and oil's evolving role continue to influence American policy and regional stability.

It would be beneficial for future scientific research to study and examine the negative impacts of U.S. intervention in the Middle East in the political, social, cultural, and economic sectors, so that the consequences of these interventions and their outcomes can be better understood.

Suppose the countries of the Middle East further recognize the consequences and harms of U.S. intervention in their countries and focus on strengthening their internal capacities. In that case, it will restore both physical and psychological security in their nations. This will contribute to long-term stability and progress in their countries.

Suggestions and Future Research

Given the complex and multifaceted nature of U.S. involvement in the Middle East, future research should focus on deepening the understanding of how economic interests, particularly in oil, continue to shape U.S. foreign policy. One promising area for future inquiry is the evolving role of alternative energy sources and the increasing self-sufficiency of the U.S. in oil production. Research could explore how this shift influences U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East and its broader geopolitical posture, particularly in relation to emerging powers like China and Russia, which have also increased their involvement in the region (Fang & Lu, 2021). This could lead to a reassessment of the U.S.'s long-term goals in the Middle East.

Moreover, future studies should investigate the impact of U.S. interventions on regional stability and democratization efforts. While the U.S. has espoused the promotion of democracy,

the effectiveness of these initiatives in the face of authoritarian regimes should be further examined. Research could analyze whether these efforts have led to meaningful political change or have simply reinforced autocratic rule under the guise of stability (Guzansky, 2013).

In addition, the emerging diversification of economies in the Gulf, exemplified by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, warrants further research into its impact on U.S.-Middle East relations. Future studies could explore the potential shifts in alliances, the economic and political reforms underway in the region, and how these transformations affect the U.S.'s foreign policy objectives. These changes' long-term implications for regional and global stability are crucial areas for continued academic exploration.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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