



National Security in Saudi Arabia: Threats, Responses, and Challenges (Praeger Security International)

Anthony H. Cordesman

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With continuing instability in Iraq, the threat of a nuclear Iran, and the ever-present reality of further terrorist attacks within its own borders, Saudi Arabia has been forced to make some hard decisions. The current structure of the Saudi security apparatus is only one pathway to improved security. Economic and demographic threats may well be the hardest hurdles to overcome. What has been accomplished since 2001 and what are the real prospects and implications of further reform? To what extent should the kingdom continue to rely on the US to protect its interests?

Cordesman and Obaid argue that it is time to put an end to client and tutorial relations. Saudi Arabia must emerge as a true partner. This will require the creation of effective Saudi forces for both defense and counterterrorism. Saudi Arabia has embarked on a process of political, economic, and social reforms that reflects a growing understanding by the governing members of the royal family, Saudi technocrats, and Saudi businessmen that Saudi Arabia must reform and diversify its economy and must create vast numbers of new jobs for its young and growing population. There is a similar understanding that economic reform must be combined with some level of political and social reform if Saudi Arabia is to remain stable in the face of change. With Gulf security, the war on terrorism, and the security of some sixty percent of the world's oil reserves at stake, the real question is how quickly Saudi Arabia can change and adapt its overall approach to security, and how successful it will be in the process.

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